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THE SCIOTO SCOUTS.

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THE
SCIOTO SCOUTS;

OR,

THE SHAWNEES' DECOY

BY EDWARD WILLETT,

Author of the following Dime Novels :

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THE SCIOTO SCOUTS.

CHAPTER I.

THE SCOUTS.

THE miracle of spring had been wrought, and the forest had arrayed itself in its garniture of green. The buds that had swelled in March and burst in April, were now bunches of full-grown foliage, heavy, waxy, fresh and fragrant. Birds were singing in every tree, bright flowers were springing into bloom on all sides, and the broad Ohio was filled from bank to bank with a muddy flood that turbulently hastened to find its way to the distant ocean.

It was impossible for the eye to penetrate far into the forest, so dense was the mass of dark green foliage that obstructed the vision. Equally impossible was it for any individual who would use proper caution, to be heard as he stepped easily upon the damp leaves of last year's growth that covered the moist soil. A shower that had recently fallen had left the face of nature fresh and gay, and had imparted to the ground a softness that prevented it from responding, crispily and noisily, as in the dry summer-time, to the most cautious tread. No better opportunity could have been presented to such as wished to see without being perceived, and to move without being heard.

So thought, no doubt, a man who was stealthily stepping from tree to tree, near where the Scioto empties into the Ohio, and he inwardly blessed the moistening rain and the dense canopy of green.

Although hardly above the medium height, this man was of large size, almost gigantic, in fact. He was by no means corpulent, nor what is called " chunky " in form ; but his shoulders were unusually broad, and his chest was unusually full ; while the size of his limbs and thickness of his sturdy neck were also indicative of great strength. His head was nearly square, and was covered with a thick coat of short and curling brown hair.

His features were plain, but not uncomely, and wore an expression of good-humor which generally accompanies conscious power. He was dressed in a coarse homespun hunting-shirt, with leather leggings and moccasins, and his arms were the usual rifle, hunting-knife and tomahawk of the pioneer.

Having described this man, it is only necessary to give his name and occupation. He was Robert Hardnett, better known as "Buck" Hardnett, was thirty years of age, and the greater part of his life had been spent on the frontier. At that period (1790) by the direction of Colonel George Rogers Clark, who then commanded the Virginia frontier, each settlement in Kentucky was required to keep two "State spies," or scouts, in constant service, to watch the movements of the Indians and guard against their attacks. Buck Hardnett was one of the men selected for this duty by the settlement to which he belonged, and was peculiarly qualified for the position by his strength of body, by his experience in Indian warfare, by his courage, his caution and his sagacity. He was now scouting, on the north side of the river, for the purpose of ascertaining the strength and intentions of a band that was reported to have rendezvoused near the mouth of the Scioto.

Heavy as he was, and seemingly clumsy, Buck Hardnett stepped as lightly and noiselessly as a kitten. He walked slightly bent, with his keen blue eyes watching every tree and bush and the motion of every leaf. Not a shadow was cast in the forest, but he saw it and knew its cause; not a squirrel leaped upon a tree, not a bird fluttered among the branches, but he knew what it was, and could locate it instantly.

The quickness with which he saw and heard every thing was only equaled by the caution with which he kept himself unseen and unheard. Although his eyes did not appear to notice the ground upon which he trod, he never stepped upon a twig, nor ever came in contact with any object that might give back a sound to his touch. If any moving thing in the forest attracted his attention, he at once stopped, and remained as motionless as a statue, until he had discovered its nature and object. His feet trod only on the soft carpet of moist leaves, his breathing was measured and silent as if he feared that it might lead to his detection, and even his nostrils aided him in determining the possibility of danger.

Such was the silent and cautious manner in which the Indian brave lurked about the rude settlement of the pioneer white man, hoping to strike a deadly blow and escape undetected. Such, too, was the silent and cautious style of warfare which the white man was compelled to use against his savage foe.

Thus Buck Hardnett worked his way down the slope, generally keeping behind one of the large beech, oak or walnut trees with which it was clothed. When the slope descended more rapidly into the hollow that stretched down to the river, he used still greater caution, and wormed himself over the ground like a snake, lest even the tip of his coon-skin cap might be seen above the bushes.

At last he halted, ensconcing himself behind a fallen tree in the midst of some black-gum bushes, and kept his eyes and ears open, to see and hear what was going on below him.

There was enough to call for the full exercise of those organs. In the hollow were seated fifty Indian warriors, freshly painted and well armed, and one of their number, who appeared to be a chief, was addressing them. It was the object of the scout to learn the intentions of these warriors, and he could not have happened upon them at a better time for accomplishing his object.

There was another person, a white man, seated in the center of the circle of warriors, to whom the attention of Buck Hardnett was attracted as soon as he was near enough to distinguish the visages of the party in the hollow. This man was naked to the waist—in fact, his only garment was a pair of breeches, such as were worn in the settlement—and his back bore the marks of stripes.—His bare feet, too, were sore and bleeding, as if he had been compelled to travel a long distance over rough paths. As he sat there, with his head bowed, and his bound hands crossed upon his knees, he looked so woe-begone and miserable, that the warm heart of the scout went out to him in pity, and he inly muttered a threat that would have startled the warriors, if they could have heard it.

When the Indian speaker sat down, Buck Hardnett was satisfied. He had learned the purposes of the band, and his mission there was ended. He took the back track, going as he had come, ascended the slope, crossed a level plateau, and descended to another level, the first bottom of the Ohio. This

bottom was some sixty feet above low-water mark, clothed with a heavy growth of sycamore, sugar-maple and black walnut, and the rich alluvial soil seemed to invite the ax and plow of the industrious settler.

Here the scout halted, seated himself at the trunk of a gigantic sycamore, and looked about as if he was expecting some one. Soon the bushes parted on the slope that led to the upper bottom, and a young Indian approached, cautiously at first, and more rapidly as the white man rose and advanced to meet him.

This Indian was quite different in personal appearance and in attire, from those whom Buck Hardnett had watched in the hollow. His paint showed that he was on the war-path; but it was quite unlike that of the others, in color and style. In stature he was taller than they, his countenance was finer, and his carriage and mien were tinged by a certain air of nobility, shaded with melancholy, that set well upon him. His garments were tasteful and well made, as if he took a pride in his apparel; his weapons were fine and in splendid condition; his head was shaved, except the scalp-lock, which was neatly braided and ornamented with an eagle's feather.

Altogether, he was a person who seemed superior to the ordinary forest Indians, and he believed that he had good reason so to consider himself; for he was one of the noble Delaware race, of which there were many within the present limits of Ohio. Most of them had fraternized with the tribes among whom they had cast their lot, and accompanied them in their incursions against the settlements; but a few disdained the alliance of what they regarded as inferior tribes, and attached themselves to the superior white race, preferring to be governed, if they must be governed, by men who were not beneath them.

The young Delaware was one of the latter class. The son of a chief, he was a chief without a single follower; but, like the Bourbons in exile, he was none the less a prince. He was called Red Hawk by the white men, among whom a considerable portion of his life had been passed. He had gone on his first war-path with Buck Hardnett, and thereafter had accompanied the scout on nearly all his expeditions. Hardnett sometimes called him by his name, but more frequently

addressed him as "the sachem," knowing and respecting his pride of race and birth. Red Hawk, also, had a title of respect for his friend, whom he had named Heavy Hand. In fact, they admired and respected each other highly for the good qualities which each knew the other to possess, and the bond between two brothers could not be stronger than was their alliance.

"Did the sachem see the warriors?" asked the scout, as he rose to meet Red Hawk.

"Yes; and I saw Heavy Hand watching them and listening to the talk."

"What were they, then?"

"Shawnees. Heavy Hand knows it."

"No Mingoes?"

"No Mingoes," and a frown darkened the face of the young chief as he uttered this hated name.

"Well, it's all the same; they mean mischief. As I understood the talk, they are here for the purpose of pouncing upon the emigrant boats, of which so many are coming down the river this spring."

"Heavy Hand has understood the talk well."

"That white man—did you notice him? He has been treated badly."

"He has been whipped."

"Pretty hard, too. If there had been, say, half a dozen of them, I doubt whether they would have had a chance to whip him again. For what purpose do you suppose they have brought him here?"

"I think the Heavy Hand knows."

"I can guess, and my guess don't make me feel a bit friendly toward those red-skins. It's my belief, Red Hawk, that they won't move far from where they are now, and it is my duty to try to block their game, by going up the river and warning the boats, until we can get a force from the settlements to rout them out. Will the sachem go with me?"

"Will the eagle fly?"

Without any more words, the two friends struck off into the forest.

CHAPTER II.

COVERING A TRAIL.

BUCK HARDNETT and the Delaware were obliged to make a long *détour* to get above the Shawnees, who were, as has been stated, near where the Scioto empties into the Ohio. When the two scouts had passed around them, they struck the Ohio about a mile above the mouth of the Scioto, and traveled up the bank of the river, keeping a continual look-out for descending boats.

There was, at that time, an extensive emigration to the rich and beautiful lands of Kentucky, which were regarded as a paradise for hunters and farmers. A large part of this emigration floated down the Ohio, in "arks," flat-boats and barges, which sometimes made the voyage singly, and sometimes in companies of three or four. Already several unprotected boats had been captured by the wily savages, and their occupants murdered or carried into captivity. But even bad news travels slowly from a distant frontier, and emigrants hastened to take their departure from Fort Pitt and other points up the river, without a foreboding of the dangers that beset their route.

The scouts traveled very cautiously, taking the greatest pains to conceal their trail, lest the cunning Shawnees should discover their errand and intercept them. At noon they stopped to rest, and to eat their frugal meal of dried venison and parched corn. They had shot no game, for fear that the sound of their guns might be heard by an enemy; they made no fire, for fear of being detected by the smoke, and on account of the difficulty of obliterating the traces of the fire. After dinner they would not smoke their pipes, lest the scent of the tobacco might be wafted to the nostrils of some lurking Shawnee, and they sat in the shade without that comfort.

"Has the Heavy Hand thought," asked the Delaware, "that the Shawnee may be coming this way before long?"

"What! Does the sachem think that they have found our trail?"

"No."

"I should think not. It was well covered, and I would defy any red-skin to follow it, even if he should light upon it by accident."

"Heavy Hand speaks truly; but the warriors wish to capture a boat, and they will look for a boat."

"Yes; they will keep their eyes open, of course."

"They will send men up the river, to look for a boat, to let them know when it is coming, so that they may be ready for it."

"That's a fact, and I had never thought of it. I always said, Red Hawk, that you are smarter than I am, and you often prove it, though you are too modest to brag about it. The rascals are after us now, no doubt, and they may come upon us at any minute. What had we better do?"

"We ought to hide. Find a place where we can watch both the river and the Shawnees."

"You are right, as you always are. Come, and let us find a place."

They went to where the river made a bend toward the north-east, and concealed themselves in the horse-shoe, where they could have a clear view for two miles up the river. Hardnett remained at the bank to watch the water; while Red Hawk lurked in the forest to look out for the Shawnees from below.

It was nearly dusk when the scout, who, tired of sitting, had risen to his feet, heard a slight "hist" that caused him to sink back into his concealment. In a few moments Red Hawk came silently creeping up to him.

"What has the sachem seen?" asked Hardnett.

"Shawnees. They are just going by. Listen!"

The scout listened, and plainly heard footsteps and muttering voices, that gradually passed by the place where he was concealed.

"Three?" he asked, in a whisper.

"Three warriors."

"We can easily manage them. Have they found our trail?"

"No. They were not looking for any trail, and were not covering their own."

"Of course, then, they have not found ours. It is getting dark, and they will not go much further before they camp. Then we will creep up on them and settle them."

The Delaware laid his hand on his companion's arm.

Hardnett listened and again heard the footsteps and the muttering voices.

"They are coming this way," whispered Red Hawk.

"They are, indeed. They mean to camp right here. It's certain they've not found our trail, or they would be silent. Well, it's best as it is, perhaps. Let the sachem drop down under the bank, and I will follow in a few minutes."

Red Hawk did as his friend requested, and disappeared. Hardnett carefully covered the trail, not trusting to the darkness to conceal the traces of their presence, and followed his companion down the bank.

The river was at flood, but not at its full hight, and there was plenty of room for concealment above the water's edge, the vines and bushes that overhung the shelving bank effectually screening them from the view of those above, if they should happen to look down upon them.

Hardly were they quietly ensconced in this hiding-place, when they knew, from the footsteps and the voices, that the Indians had reached the spot which they had just left. They also knew, from what was said, that they meant to pass the night there.

Having settled this point, the Shawnees proceeded to satisfy their hunger. They made no fire; but, a little less cautious than the previous occupants of the horse-shoe had been, a pipe was lighted and passed around after the meal, and they jabbered with none of the reticence for which Indians were noted in their intercourse with white men.

After a while the jabbering ceased, and the scouts concluded that the Shawnees had laid down to sleep. After waiting about half an hour, for sleep to overcome them, Red Hawk, who was much the lightest of the two, stole up the bank to reconnoiter. There was a look of disappointment in his face when he returned.

"What is the matter?" asked Hardnett. "Are they not asleep yet?"

"One is awake, He is standing up, leaning against a tree."

"Which way is his face turned?"

"Toward the river."

"I see, they have set him there to guard the camp and watch the river. This makes our task a little harder; but it must be done. There is only one way to do it, Red Hawk. One of us must go around and creep up behind that fellow and put a knife into him. If we dared to shoot, there would be no trouble; but we can only trust to the cold steel. Will the sachem undertake that job?"

"Yes."

"You must make no more noise than the grass makes in growing. When you get up behind the tree, you can choose your own time to strike, and I will be ready to settle those who are lying down."

The Delaware glided away, around by the water's edge, and Buck Hardnett cautiously ascended the bank.

The task was, indeed, one that required the utmost silence and prudence. The night was wonderfully still. The slightest sound could be heard, the gurgling of the turbid flood along the river bank, the hum of the night insects in the forest, even the gentle breath of the breeze that scarcely stirred the leaves of the trees. The Shawnee sentinel, too, was wide awake; the moon, then nearly to the first quarter, was shining on his face, and Buck Hardnett could see that his eyes were open. There could be no doubt that he heard and saw every thing that could be heard and seen.

The scout had raised himself up behind some bushes that grew at the edge of the bank. He was within less than two rods of the sleeping Indians, beyond whom stood the sentinel; but it was necessary to get nearer, as his attack must be made simultaneously with Red Hawk's, and their three enemies must be silenced together, so that no one of them should have a moment's time to give the alarm. To accomplish this without discovery required an extraordinary amount of skill, prudence and patience.

Between the scout and the sleepers, hardly three yards from their heads, was a fallen log, nearly covered with vines and bushes. The sentinel stood some two rods from this, with his back against a large tree. While the Shawnee was looking up the river, eagerly watching for a boat that might furnish spoil

for himself and his marauding companions, Hardnett laid himself on the ground, and wormed his way like a snake, "inching" carefully toward the log, and covering himself behind the bushes and tall weeds. This operation was performed in perfect silence, and was necessarily a slow one; but he at last reached the log, and found himself so near the Indians that he could hear the deep breathing of the sleepers.

As he lay behind the log, he heard the chirp of a cricket, which he recognized as a signal from Red Hawk. Raising his head, he peered through the vines that grew over the log, and detected an almost imperceptible movement of the foliage behind the sentinel. Convinced that his friend was playing his part in the maneuver, he followed the movement with his eye, until it ceased near the tree against which the sentinel was standing.

While he gazed eagerly at the spot, fearing that some slight noise from Red Hawk might attract the attention of the Shawnee and destroy the plot, he saw the Delaware slowly and silently arise from the ground, until he stood, with his knife in his hand, within an arm's length of the sentinel.

He then seemed to hesitate, as if uncertain whether he should trust to the knife. As the back of the Shawnee was toward him, he would be compelled to leap around in front before he could strike at the heart of his foe; while the crash of a blow with the tomahawk might arouse the sleepers before Hardnett could rush upon them. The scout wished that he could call to him, and tell him to use the tomahawk; but he was obliged even to breathe lightly, lest the noise of his breathing should be heard. It was with a feeling of relief, therefore, that he saw the Delaware at last sheathe his knife and handle his tomahawk. At the same time he grasped his own tomahawk with his right hand, and crouched himself, like a panther preparing for a spring.

Suddenly the Delaware's keen tomahawk flashed in the moonlight, and descended upon the head of the unsuspecting sentinel, cutting into his brain with a sickening crash, and the Shawnee fell without a word or a murmur.

Almost at the same instant Buck Hardnett had made his spring, and his tomahawk was buried, with unerring aim, in the skull of one of sleeping Indians. As the other started to

his feet, the scout, finding his tomahawk unavailable at the moment, knocked him down with a blow of his fist, stifling the yell he was about to utter, and thrust his knife into his heart.

"That was well done," said Hardnett, as the Delaware came up.

"Yes. No noise."

"Couldn't have been done neater, if I say it myself. Silent and sure—that's a good motto. Do you want the scalps?"

"No. If they were Mingo, I might count them."

"What shall we do with the carrion?"

"Throw it into the river."

"That's hardly spoken like yourself, sachem. You should remember that the river runs down-stream, and the Shawnees are in that direction. If they should see one of these bodies, they would guess more than we want them to know. We must hide them, and must do it carefully."

The two friends carried the bodies of the Shawnees down the bank, and concealed them under the bushes. They then returned, and laid down near where their enemies had slept their last, confident of being able to rest undisturbed until morning.

At the break of day they were awake and stirring. They first concealed the arms and accouterments of the slain Shawnees, noticing the spot carefully, so that they might find them in case of future need. Their next care was, to obliterate all traces of the conflict, leaving the ground in the vicinity in such a condition that no passer-by should suspect that it had been trodden upon. This was a task that required care and time, and the sun was quite high when it was finished.

"It does seem to me," said Buck Hardnett, looking back as they left the place, "that we have covered our trail mighty well. I defy those red-skins to guess that we've been about, until they miss those three warriors, and then they will begin to use their eyes. But it may rain before that time, and that would puzzle them. We may as well keep on up the river."

The scouts went about two miles further up the river, and then seated themselves on the bank, to rest and eat and take counsel together.

"I've about come to the conclusion," said Hardnett, "that

we ought to try to do something more besides staying here to look out for boats and warn them of the red-skins down yonder. The fact is, there ought to be a force called out to break up the gang. If one of us could stay and watch, while the other would go to the settlements with the news, that would be the best thing. It would hardly do for you to stay, as the people on the boats would notice your color and distrust you; but you might go to the settlements."

"Look!" replied the Delaware, as he pointed up the river
"There is a boat."

"You are right, sachem. Two of them, by thunder!"

CHAPTER III.

THE DECOY.

It was with bright hopes and pleasant anticipations that Nathan Archer and his family started from Fort Henry, on their way to the frontier settlements of Kentucky. He regarded it as extremely fortunate that Stephen Alleyne, the accepted lover and affianced husband of his daughter Susan, had concluded to emigrate to the same place at the same time, as their combined forces, he judged, would be sufficient to guard them against any possible danger. Their route lay down the Ohio and up the Kentucky river, and flat-boats were their means of conveyance.

It is unnecessary to describe particularly the construction of these flat-boats; but it may be said, for the information of the rising generation, that they were oblong water-tight boxes, with sides and roof of lumber or of clapboards split from cypress or oak trees. Nathan Archer's boat was forty feet in length by twelve in width, and was divided by a cross partition into two apartments. The smallest of these was the sleeping-room of his wife and daughter, and the other was nearly filled with the miscellaneous "plunder" of an emigrant-family. At each end of the boat was an unclosed space of four feet, where a large oar was fastened upon the gunwale, one at the bow

and one at the stern, on opposite sides of the craft. These oars served to steer the boat, as well as for the purpose of propulsion ; but there was also a steering-oar, longer and heavier than the others, which projected out from the stern, its handle reaching up over the roof, where the steersman was generally stationed. The crew of Nathan Archer's boat consisted, besides himself, of two men, one of whom was his son Bartholomew, familiarly known as Bat Archer. Bat was a stout, manly young fellow of twenty-two, and his sister Sue was a brown-eyed, pretty girl of nineteen.

Stephen Alleyne's boat was of the same construction as that of Nathan Archer ; but it had no partition, as the interior was filled with a stock of salt, nails, farming utensils and other tools, with a small assortment of dry-goods and other articles, which he expected to dispose of among the frontier settlers. Stephen was a few years older than Bat Archer, and was a tall, athletic, black-eyed young Virginian, full of energy and daring. His crew was composed of two stout and fearless Pennsylvania bordermen, named Isaac Marks and William Hall.

The voyagers floated pleasantly down the Ohio in their uncouth vessels, with the spring flood, feasting their eyes upon the beautiful panorama that was continually opening before them, and wondering at the rich lands that spread out invitingly upon either side of the river.

Sue Archer had christened her father's ark the Good Hope, and Stephen Alleyne had named his the Promised Land. The two boats journeyed together in good hope toward the promised land, with no labor or trouble on the part of their crews, except to keep them in the channel, and steer clear of floating logs or trees.

In mentioning the occupants of Alleyne's boat, an important person was omitted. This was his sister Margaret, three years younger than himself, his only relative, as far as he knew, in the world. In appearance and disposition she was almost the counterpart of her brother, for whom her affection was unbounded.

Margaret Alleyne felt a strong affection for Sue Archer, as her brother's intended wife, and Sue, on her part, admired and looked up to the sister of her lover. As a matter of course the two girls desired to be often together, and Stephen was always ready to row his sister in his "dinky" to visit Sue. The

two boats, in fact, were frequently locked together, and were never far apart, their floating abilities being about equal.

Thus they journeyed, without molestation, and without any striking incidents to break the monotony of the voyage, until they had passed over about half the route, when Nathan Archer, who was on the roof of his boat, espied two men standing on the north bank of the river.

As only Indians were expected to be met with in that locality, the alarm was at once given, and all on board, including Stephen Alleyne and Margaret, who happened to be visiting the Good Hope, hastened to take a look at their enemies.

The current was about to carry the ark in toward the north shore, and Nathan Archer, seizing the steering-oar, ordered his men to row out to the middle of the river, when he was hailed in unmistakable English, and Stephen Alleyne at the same time laid his hand on his arm.

"Don't you see that one of those is a white man?" said Stephen. "He is hailing us, and you had better let the boat drift in, and ask him what he wants."

"Don't know about that," replied the old man. "I see one Indian, and there may be more in the bushes. I have heard that some white men have joined them, and are worse than the red-skins."

"There can be no danger in letting the boat drift in toward the shore, and we can easily pull out if we want to."

"Perhaps you are right. We will let her edge in a little, anyhow. He is hailing us again. Hallo, yourself! What do you want? Want to come aboard?"

"No. I want to warn you that there are Indians below, on this bank, and you must look out for them."

"We will do that, you may be sure. Who are you, and what are you doing there?"

"We are scouts from the other side of the river, and are trying to warn boats of the red-skins down yonder."

"There may not be another boat along for a week, as none was ready when we left Fort Henry. Hadn't you better come aboard?"

"Reckon not. We've got our work to 'tend to. You had better steer pretty close to the other shore, and keep a bright look-out, and not take to the land."

"All right!" bawled Nathan Archer, as the boat was drifting out of hearing of the scouts.

"I hardly know what to make of those chaps," he remarked, speaking to Stephen.

"Why not, sir? It was very kind to give us warning."

"I think we will be likely to keep a look-out for Indians, without being told to. They may mean well; but one of them was a red-skin."

"There are some friendly Indians."

"And a great many who are not so friendly. There are some very near white men, too, and that man may be one of them."

"If he had meant harm, he would have accepted your invitation to come aboard."

"There is nothing as cunning as an Indian, unless it is a white man who has joined them. It may all be part of a scheme to get hold of us with little trouble and danger. He told us to keep close to the left shore, and that may be the very place where he wants to get us. I believe I will keep clear of both shores, and steer as near as possible in the middle of the river."

"I believe the man was friendly and honest; but there can be no harm in doing as you propose."

Stephen and his sister soon ended their visit, and rowed back to their own boat, which was nearly a quarter of a mile astern of the Good Hope. He at once set his men at work with the oars, in order that the Promised Land might catch up with her consort.

Nathan Archer, in the mean while, had steered his ark out into the middle of the river, and was carefully watching both banks for signs of an enemy. It had required some rowing to get the boat into this position, for which reason Alleyne's craft had gained on the other quite slowly.

It was not long before the old man, standing on the roof of the Good Hope, caught sight of a man on the right bank of the river, who was running up and down and beckoning to the boat. He was a white man, nearly naked, and his piteous gestures indicated that he was in great trouble.

"What do you think of that, Tom Blodgett?" asked Mr. Archer, addressing the man who stood at the bow oar.

"That is a white man, sir, and he is in trouble; no doubt about that. I think we might steer in and find out what is the matter?"

Mr. Archer hesitated a moment, and then steered the ark in toward the shore, while the man on the bank continued his piteous gestures and silent appeals.

"What is the matter? What do you want?" asked the old man, when he was near enough to make himself heard.

"I have escaped from the Indians. For God's sake take me on board!"

"Are there any Indians about here?"

"No, they have crossed the river; but they will soon come back and find me. I don't know which way to go, and am nearly starved."

"You see I was right, Tom Blodgett," said the old man, "when I said that the chap up yonder had some motive in sending us over to the other side, just where the Indians could have easily picked us off."

"Don't you know that man, father?" asked Susan, who had been brought out by this new excitement.

"No. Do you?"

"I believe it is Amos Darnel."

"Shouldn't wonder if you are right, girl," replied her father, shading his eyes with his hands. "He is in trouble, anyhow, and we ought to take him off. Give a strong pull with your oar, Tom Blodgett, and we will run right in. Look out, you man ashore, and be ready to jump aboard as soon as we touch the bank."

A few sweeps of the long bow oar turned the ark toward the bank. Bat Archer then plied his oar, and the Good Hope slowly neared the shore, the man on the bank walking down to meet it.

"Look alive, now!" shouted Nathan Archer. "Jump quick, and we will shove right off!"

Those were the last words he spoke. Hardly had the ark touched the shore, when there came a volley of rifle-shots from the forest, and the next moment the bank was alive with yelling Indians.

The old man and Tom Blodgett fell dead, one shot through the head, the other through the heart. Bat Archer, astounded

by this unexpected reception, lost his presence of mind for a moment, but soon regained it, and seized a pole to push off the boat.

His effort was unsuccessful. The savages were already in possession of the boat, and he was stunned with the blow of a tomahawk before he could drop the pole and defend himself.

When he recovered his senses, he found himself lying on the bank, bound, and guarded by two Indians. His mother and sister were seated near him, also under guard, and the rest of the Indians were pleasantly engaged in plundering the boat.

CHAPTER IV.

A FLOATER.

STEPHEN ALLEYNE's boat, as the reader has been informed, was a little distance behind the Good Hope, and Marks and Hall were gradually shortening the distance by rowing, while the proprietor of the boat was on the roof, managing the steering-oar.

"What is the old man up to now?" asked Hall, who was at the bow oar, as he saw the Good Hope turning in toward the shore. "He surely can't be meaning to land."

"There is a white man on the bank," replied Stephen. "Don't you see him? He is making signals, as if he is in distress. Now they are talking with him; but I can't make out what is said."

"They are going to land, sir. I wouldn't have thought it of the old man—so extra cautious as he has always been."

"I am afraid there is some trick in it, though it is hard to believe that any white man would be mean enough to act as a decoy for those bloody savages. We had better edge in toward the shore. Pull up lively, Isaac."

Both oarsmen bent to their sweeps, and the head of the Promised Land was turned toward the shore, just as the Good Hope touched the bank.

"My God!"

This exclamation was forced at the same time from the lips of Stephen Alleyne and Will Hall, as the rifles of the concealed Indians were discharged with deadly effect among the crew of the Good Hope. Marks, who had not been able, from his position, to see what was going on, stood up and looked over the roof; while Margaret Alleyne, her face white with terror and anxiety, peered out at the little window in the side of the boat.

Stephen Alleyne acted like a crazy man. He called frantically for his rifle, and, with a strong sweep of his steering-oar, turned the boat's head directly toward the shore.

"What are you doing?" screamed Hall, as he rowed vigorously to counteract the effect of the steering-oar.

"Don't you see that they are murdering our friends? The old man and Blodgett are shot, and Ben Archer is down, and Susan will be killed unless we can help her."

"But we can do nothing by going ashore. We will only give the red-skins our own scalps, and make matters worse. Don't you know that your sister is on this boat? Do you want her to be killed?"

By the united exertions of the oarsmen the ark was turned from the dangerous direction, and was again brought out into the channel, where it was beyond the reach of Shawnee bullets. Stephen Alleyne descended from the roof, Margaret came out from the interior of the boat, and all gazed in silence at the spot where their friends had been murdered and captured. They saw the savages carry Susan Archer ashore, together with her mother and brother, and watched them as they proceeded to pile their plunder out on the bank.

"You see, Mr. Alleyne, that we could do nothing," said Will Hall.

"You were right, Will. We would only have lost our lives, without accomplishing any thing. And yet, something must be done. We don't deserve to be called men, if we allow those red-skins to kill our friends, or to carry them off, without making an effort to save them."

"What can we do with such odds against us?"

"I can't tell you, now. The odds are very heavy; but something may be gained by stratagem. There is one thing we can do—we can anchor the boat here, and can think of

the matter at our leisure. We must not forget to trust to Providence, as well as to rely upon ourselves."

"It is a dangerous plan, sir. The Indians have the other boat, and they can float down to us whenever they want to."

"I believe we could beat them off, and I feel sure that we could escape from them. What do you think, Margaret? Can we desert our friends?"

"By no means. We must stay by them as long as it is possible to help them. I hope you are not afraid, Will Hall."

"Not for myself, miss; but I am a little skeered for you. If you want to stay, you will find that Will Hall will stay as long as any man."

The Promised Land was anchored in the middle of the river, within sight of the captured boat. Stephen Alleyne, gloomy but determined, busied himself in cleaning his rifle and running bullets, and the two oarsmen followed his example, while Margaret prepared supper.

After supper they sat out at the bow of the boat, discussing plans for assisting their friends, and the chances of being themselves attacked. There was no change visible on shore. The Indians had finished plundering the Good Hope, and, to judge by the noise they made, were enjoying a carouse.

Isaac Marks noticed a log floating down toward them, and called Alleyne's attention to it, remarking that he feared it might hit the boat.

"No danger," replied Stephen. "It will go just to the right of us."

"Provided it don't take a notion to whirl around."

"It can't whirl quick enough to hit us. But there is something else about that log, Isaac. It seems to me that I see a man's head alongside of it."

"I think I do see a bunch of ha'r. Can you see it, Will Hall?"

"Yes; and I see a man's hand against the log. Do you think it is an Indian, Mr. Alleyne?"

"One Indian would hardly dare to come to us in that manner; but we will be ready for him, whatever he is."

"Hallo the boat!"

The hail from the log was so low that it could not possibly be heard on shore, and the voice was not that of an Indian.

"Hallo, yourself!" replied Stephen. "Are you white or red?"

"White, if I know myself," answered the stranger, as he raised his head above the log. "Will some of you reach down and take my gun as I come by the boat?"

The log drifted within a few feet of the ark, and Stephen reached down and took the rifle that was handed to him. The stranger disappeared for a moment, then rose on the near side of the log, and drew himself up at the side of the boat.

"You swim like a fish," said Stephen, as he helped him up. "I would like to know how you kept your rifle dry."

"That tree had forks enough to lay it on, sir. My powder-horn is water-proof, and a little wetting won't hurt my bullets, and I reckon I am all right."

"We are very well pleased to see a white man here, and would be glad to know who you are and where you come from."

"I am commonly called Buck Hardnett, and I hope the lady will excuse my looks, which are those of a drown-ded rat," replied the stranger, with a shy glance at Margaret Alleyne.

"Are you not the same man who hailed us from the bank this morning, above here?"

"It was the other boat that I hailed, I believe. The old man didn't seem disposed to follow the advice I gave him."

"He saw an Indian with you, and was suspicious; but I don't think he would have landed if he had not been enticed to the shore by a white man."

"Ah! that white man! I 'lowed that the red-skins meant to use him in that way."

"Is he a renegade?"

"A what, sir?"

"Is he a white man who has joined the Indians, like Simon Girty?"

"Not quite so bad as that, perhaps. It's a trick the red-skins have started lately, here on the river. They catch a white man, and whip him or scare him half to death, until they make him obey their orders like a dog. Then they set him out on the bank, when a boat comes along, to pretend that he is in distress, and so bring the boat to land. Then the red-skins, who are hid in the bushes, find it easy to

capture the boat and kill the people, just as you have seen this evening."

"That white man, then, was forced to act as he did?"

"I suppose he was, sir; but it does seem to me that any white man who had half a heart would rather be killed than help to murder his own people. I don't claim to be any better than the common run of folks; but they couldn't force me into such a thing by burning me a dozen times."

"You speak like a man. But I have forgotten to offer you any thing to eat, and you must be hungry."

"I am used to that, sir."

"Margaret, set out some supper for our friend."

"Where were you when the other boat was captured?" asked Stephen, while the scout satisfied his hunger.

"Not far behind you, sir. In fact, I was nearly abreast of your boat. I was afraid that something wrong would happen, and I edged down the bank to watch you."

"What Indian was that who was with you?"

"Red Hawk is his name. He is a Delaware, and a partner of mine."

"Where is he now?"

"I left him on shore, thinking you might be suspicious again if he should come floating down the river as I did. But he's got his work to do there. It's likely that he's in the Shawnee camp at this minute, and I shouldn't be surprised if he were to teach those red-skins some new tricks before he is through with them."

Stephen Alleyne turned the conversation upon the subject that most nearly interested him, the possibility of saving Sue Archer and her mother and brother. It was Hardnett's opinion that they could do nothing then but wait and watch. Their own position might soon become dangerous, in which event it would puzzle them to escape. It was the custom of the Indians, when they had struck a blow, to hasten home with their prisoners and plunder; but it was hardly to be expected that they would go without attempting to strike another blow, while the Promised Land lay so temptingly almost within their reach.

"Don't you think we could beat them off?" inquired Alleyne.

The scout shook his head dubiously.

"There are fifty of the red-skins," he said. "That is, there were fifty yesterday—now there are forty-seven, I suppose. It is pretty heavy odds for four of us."

"You forget my sister. I think she would count."

The scout bent upon Margaret Alleyne a glance of respectful admiration that brought the color to her cheeks.

"Even with her help," he said, "they would be too many for us. They have the other boat, sir, and the advantage of the current would be with them. We could hardly hope to hurt a man of them before they came on us."

"You think, then, that I have done wrong in stopping here, that I have only put myself in the way of danger, without being able to help my friends? I wish you would give me your opinion plainly. If no one but myself was concerned I would risk any danger to serve those on shore; but my sister is with me."

"There is danger, sir. You know that as well as I do. But it seems to me that this boat might escape if it should be turned loose as soon as the red-skins start out with the other. As for fighting them, I *don't* think that we would have any chance to beat them off."

"Can we remain here, then, until they set off after us?"

"I don't see any thing to hinder. The red-skins have canoes, I reckon. If not, they can easily make them. But it's not the canoes that troubles me. All these Shawnee warriors could lie down in the boat yonder, without giving us a fair show to shoot one of them. I think it would be best for the sake of your friends on shore, to stay here as long as you can. While the red-skins are where they are, there's a chance for those prisoners; when they start toward their homes the chance will grow slimmer every hour."

"My sister says that we must not desert our friends while it is possible to help them."

"She carries a brave heart," replied the scout, with another admiring smile, "and we ought to be good enough men to stand up to what she says. But, if that other boat ever leaves the shore, this one had better get out of the way as fast as it can."

"I believe they are trying to do something now," said

Margaret, as she pointed toward the Good Hope. "I can hear them on the boat, and I think I can see them."

"Your sight and hearing are better than ours. I see them now, and hear them too. Why, what can be the matter with the varmints? Red Hawk must have been playing a trick on them."

CHAPTER V.

THE "TRICKS" OF RED HAWK.

RED HAWK had been left by Buck Hardnett on the point of land where they had had the encounter with the three scouts from the Shawnee camp.

The friends, in retracing their steps down the river-bank, heard the firing and the shouting below, and knew that a collision had occurred between the whites and the Indians. They believed that one or both the boats had been decoyed to the shore, in which event they could not doubt the nature and result of the collision; but they were unable from their position on the bank, to form any certain conclusions.

At the suggestion of Red Hawk, they concealed their rifles and ammunition under the bank, divested themselves of a portion of their clothing, and swam over to a small island, about half-way from the channel to the middle of the stream. Here they had a good view of all that happened, and their worst fears were soon confirmed. When Stephen Alleyne's boat dropped down and anchored, Buck Hardnett determined upon the course that he meant to pursue, and he swam back to the north shore with Red Hawk.

The scouts held a brief consultation, which ended in jointly pushing off a log that had caught at the bank. The log was a portion of the trunk of a tree, with several of the branches remaining upon it. Having ascertained which side would float uppermost, Hardnett placed his rifle securely on the branches, and swam off with the log, gradually steering it into the channel. The water was quite cold; but the hardy woodman was accustomed to cold water and cold comfort of all sorts.

Red Hawk had his task, which had been agreed upon during the consultation, and he set at work, when his friend had left him, to perform it.

Taking the blanket and head-dress of one of the Indians whose bodies had been concealed under the bank, he assumed them in place of his own, and then, with pigments obtained from the person of the same warrior, painted his face after the Shawnee fashion. This done, he proceeded down the river until he was near the camp of the Shawnees, when he made a *détour*, and approached it by the rear.

The newly-risen moon shed but a feeble light through the clouds that obscured its face, and the comparative darkness would aid his disguise; but he was resolved to prevent discovery as far as it was possible to do so. He did not, therefore, enter the camp openly and like a new-comer, as in that case he might have been noticed and questioned; but he stole in quietly, and insinuated himself among the warriors in such a manner that none of them suspected that one had been added to their number. It was easy to do this, as all were engaged in carousing and examining the plunder that had been taken from the Good Hope.

Stately and silent, the young Delaware strode through the encampment, his eye taking in every thing, although he seemed to notice nothing. Near the edge of the encampment, under a large tree, was seated a young white man, whose arms and feet were bound. At a little distance from him was an old woman, with her head bowed in grief, and near her sat a much younger woman, who was more beautiful than Red Hawk had ever dreamed of. These were not bound, and the three Indians who were guarding the party were busily occupied in quarreling over the shares of the plunder of the boat.

The admiring gaze of Red Hawk was fastened upon Sue Archer, until she noticed him, and turned her face from him. The warrior turned away with a sigh, and strolled down to the water, where the captured boat was moored.

The plunder of the Good Hope had been completed, and all the valuables had been taken out on the bank and scattered through the woods. There were a few Shawnees lingering about the boat when Red Hawk reached the bank, and he kept out of sight until they had all gone back into the woods.

Then he quietly slipped down the bank, and examined the fastenings of the boat.

The Good Hope had a long and stout cable, which had been used for making her fast when Nathan Archer wished to land. This cable had been loosely tied by the Shawnees around the trunk of a small tree, and Red Hawk perceived that it would be an easy matter to cast the boat loose. As the current was tugging strongly against her, it was probable that she would quickly float off, and she might be arrested by those below before the Shawnees could recapture her, in which event the marauders would be unable to use her against other boats descending the stream.

Red Hawk had seen and heard enough to convince him that the Shawnees intended to remain where they were, and to use the Good Hope as a piratical vessel. He thought it would be a good thing to get her out of their power.

Looking down the river, he saw that Stephen Alleyne's boat was still there, dark and motionless in the channel, and he quickly slipped the cable that confined the Good Hope to the shore. As the current began to bear her off, he ascended the bank, passed around the edge of the encampment, and mingled with the Indians who were collected about the plunder.

The enterprise of the young Delaware was not entirely successful. There had been a few Indians in the vicinity of the boat, and one of them wished to go on board directly after the cable was cast off. As he reached the bank, he saw the boat moving away, and immediately gave the alarm. In a few minutes the bank was covered with yelling and whooping Shawnees, who at once bestirred themselves to recapture the vessel, which was drifting slowly down the stream, not having yet felt the full force of the current. Swimmers plunged into the water, and quickly reached the craft. By the aid of the sweeps, which they managed clumsily enough, they succeeded in bringing the Good Hope to the shore. As there was no suspicion of treachery, the Shawnees thought that the cable had slipped, and contented themselves with tying it more securely.

Although Red Hawk had not succeeded in freeing the boat, the excitement that had been occasioned among the Shawnees by her temporary loss had given him the opportunity to execute another plan that was in his mind.

When he went back to mingle with the warriors, after loosing the cable, he strolled toward the place where Bat Archer was seated, reaching it just as the cry was raised on the bank. All the warriors, except those who were guarding the prisoners, seized their weapons, and rushed toward the river, not knowing the cause of the alarm or the extent of the danger.

The guard, also, were touched by the excitement. Without really deserting the prisoners, they went toward the bank, for the purpose of gratifying their curiosity, and to be at hand in case of necessity. Red Hawk took advantage of this moment to step up to the prisoner and cut the strips of bark that bound his hands and legs. At the same time he pointed toward the forest, and then toward the river, and was out of sight before Bat Archer could recover from his astonishment.

Fortunately, Bat Archer was a quick-witted and cool-headed young fellow, and he instantly comprehended the position of affairs. His only concern was for his mother and sister. He did not give himself the trouble to guess who or what it was that had freed him. It was a friend, of course, and that was enough for him. This friend, no doubt, would also have released his mother and sister, if it had been possible to do so; but it was plain that there was no way of escape for them at that time. It was also plain that he could not benefit them by remaining a captive, and that there was a chance for him to escape.

These thoughts—if they can be called thoughts, when he had no time for thinking—passed through his mind in a second. In fact, he jumped to his conclusion instinctively, and silently darted off into the forest, in the direction that had been pointed out by the Indian.

Quickly as Red Hawk had done his work, he had taken the precaution to secure the strips of bark that he had cut from the prisoner. If they had been left on the ground, they would have been found and examined when the escape was discovered, and the Shawnees, knowing that the prisoner had no knife, would naturally have suspected treachery. The Delaware had guarded against this, by taking with him the strips of bark as he slipped around, out of sight of the guard,

until he reached the river, where he threw them into the water.

When he came to the river, the Shawnees had regained possession of the boat, and were again making it fast to the bank. Knowing that there must soon be an alarm in another quarter, that would draw them away from the river, Red Hawk determined to remain there, as he had still another plan that might work harm to the enemy.

The Good Hope had hardly been secured to the bank, when an alarm was raised at the camp, and it was soon known that one of the prisoners had escaped. The enraged Shawnees hastened back, making the night hideous with their yells, and scattered about the woods in pursuit of the fugitive. Red Hawk gave no more thought to Bat Archer, whom he was able to render no further assistance, and proceeded to carry his plan into execution.

From among a heap of plunder that had been piled on the bank, he picked out a handsaw, the use of which he had learned among the white men. With this in his hand, he slipped down the bank, and again boarded the Good Hope. The two sweeps and the steering-oar were in their places, hanging on iron pivots at the gunwales and at the stern. Commencing with the sweeps, he sawed each of these half in two from the under side, and left them hanging as he had found them. He was only a few minutes engaged at this task; but he had not quite finished it when a renewed yelling down the river told him that the Shawnees had caught sight of the fugitive. Then a splash in the water, followed by several shots, gave him to understand that Bat Archer was trying to escape by swimming. In a little while he knew, by the yells of rage on shore, and a hearty cheer from the river, that the fugitive had reached the boat in the channel. By this time the Delaware had climbed the bank, and had returned the handsaw to the pile of plunder. He then hastened into the woods, and returned to camp with the disappointed warriors, as if he had been one of the pursuing party.

Not yet did the enraged Shawnees perceive any treachery, or suspect that an enemy was at work in their midst. Their displeasure was visited upon those who had been left to guard the prisoners, as it was supposed that the white man had

freed himself from his bonds, and that their careless curiosity had suffered him to escape. They were angry enough to make a descent upon the boat in the channel, and, as they had no other claims upon their attention just then, they determined to do so.

Twenty picked warriors took their weapons on board the Good Hope, the rest of the party remaining on shore to guard the camp. The twenty, in fact, were as many as the ark could well carry on such an expedition, and were fully enough to capture the Promised Land and overpower her crew, provided she should not slip away from them. As they were well sheltered, it would be nearly impossible to pick them off before coming in close collision, and it was reasonable to suppose that there was no chance for the Promised Land, except to escape by running down the river. If she should make this attempt, there were still enough of the Indians, provided they could use the sweeps to advantage, to pursue and overtake her. In this belief, the twenty Shawnees, having cast loose the cable, silently pushed the ark from shore, intent on scalps and plunder.

Red Hawk remained on shore, and quietly seated himself on the bank, to watch the progress of this Indian naval expedition.

Down the river, about a quarter of a mile from the Shawnee camp, he could see the somber and motionless form of Stephen Alleyne's boat, a darker spot on the dark water, with no sign of life about her. Just below him was the Good Hope, crowded with dusky savages, all of whom were concealed within the ark, except a few who stood at the sweeps and the steering-oar.

The clumsy craft did not start out into the river rapidly enough to suit its red owners, nor did its slow progress please them. Besides, they wished to practice at the oars, so that they might use them well in case the Promised Land should attempt to escape. Therefore, at the command of the chief, two of them took hold of the starboard sweep, for the purpose of forcing the boat out into the channel.

Bending to their work, they nearly turned the lightened boat around, and it was necessary to call the second oar into requisition, to counteract the effect of the first. Then

commenced a trial of skill and muscle between the two sweeps, and, shortly, as Red Hawk was expecting, the starboard oar snapped short off. This was immediately followed by a similar accident to the larboard oar, eliciting a howl of rage from the astonished Indians. As the ark had by this time veered in toward the shore, it became necessary to use the steering-oar, which broke off more easily than either of the others.

Finding themselves adrift, without oars or paddles, with no means of propelling or guiding the unwieldy ark, the Shawnees at once perceived that they would be compelled to abandon the expedition and devote all their efforts to bringing the boat back to land. Most of them stripped and jumped into the water, where some took hold of the cable, and others swam by the side of the ark. Thus, by dint of pulling and pushing, the Good Hope was brought to the shore, at a considerable distance below the point from which she had started.

Having satisfied himself that the expedition was a failure, Red Hawk returned to the camp, to learn what was next on the Shawnee programme. The next thing was a council, to determine what should be done. The warriors had examined the broken oars when they brought the boat to land, and had discovered that something was wrong. Knowing that the white owners of the boat would not have rendered them unfit for service, they naturally suspected that there was a traitor in the camp, or that enemies were about. Two men were left to watch the boat, and the remainder returned to the camp to talk the matter over.

As the council was held "in the open," where there were no closed doors, and reporters could not be barred out, it was easy for Red Hawk not only to learn the conclusions that were reached, but to listen to the deliberations as they proceeded.

It was first decided that the ark should be "cordeled" along the bank, in the morning, to the landing opposite the camp, when oars and paddles should be made, and another expedition should be sent against Alleyne's boat.

It was next unanimously concluded that daring and cunning enemies were at hand, or that there was treachery of the worst kind among themselves. This brought up the

subject of the three men who had been sent up the river, to watch for descending boats, and to report to the main body if one should come in sight. During the excitement that accompanied the capture and plunder of the Good Hope, these men had been forgotten, and it was now a serious question what had become of them.

The council decided that the warriors should all be called together, counted and examined, in order that it might be known whether the three spies were present, and whether any stranger had crept in among them. When this decision reached the ears of Red Hawk, he prudently retired, and concealed himself until the count and examination were over.

The count disclosed that the three spies were not present, and that none but Shawnee warriors, entirely above suspicion, were within the camp. Emboldened by his success thus far, the young Delaware crept back, in time to learn the next decision of the council. It was to the effect that the boat had been disabled by some subtle enemy, by whom the three spies had been either captured or killed. It was determined to send five of the most skillful warriors, before morning, on the track of the missing men, to follow their trail and ascertain what had become of them.

This was sufficient for Red Hawk. He had gained some valuable information, and he was satisfied that it would be dangerous for him to remain longer in the Shawnee camp. He stealthily withdrew, and made his way through the woods toward the river.

He had yet another blow to strike. Red Hawk was a man who never considered his work finished while he could find any thing to do. He knew that two warriors had been left in charge of the boat, and it was possible that he might diminish the strength of his enemies by that number.

When he came near the boat, he moved cautiously, and reconnoitered carefully. He soon discovered that one of the warriors was lying at the bow of the boat, asleep, and the other was seated on the ground, smoking, and looking out on the river.

The young Delaware was an adept in the art of "snaking." As the warrior's face was turned from him, Red Hawk found

it easy to worm himself within striking distance of his foe. Rising on one knee, he reached out his left hand, clapped it over the mouth of the Shawnee, drew him back, and plunged his ready knife into his heart. This was done so quickly and quietly, that the Indian on the boat was not awakened, and Red Hawk had nothing to do but to step down and dispatch him with his tomahawk.

This done, he looked for the canoe, or "dug-out," that belonged to the Good Hope, and found it tied at the stern of the ark. He placed his rifle in the canoe, and paddled swiftly out to Stephen Alleyne's boat.

CHAPTER VI.

A BLOODY TRAIL

WHEN Buck Hardnett remarked that Red Hawk must have been playing some tricks on the Shawnees, the excitement among them was such that Stephen Alleyne expressed the belief that they were about to attempt the capture of the Promised Land; but the scout told him that they would not set out on such an expedition with so much noise.

"When red-skins mean mischief," he said, "they are mighty quiet. You need never expect to hear them, and you'll be lucky if you can see them before you feel them."

It was too dark to distinguish any thing with certainty at that distance, and they could only guess, from what they could hear and see, that the boat was loose, and that the Indians were trying to get her back to her moorings. When the noises had ceased, and the dark form of the Good Hope lay motionless at the bank, they knew that they had guessed correctly.

"I told you that it was one of Red Hawk's tricks," said the scout. "He turned the boat loose; but I reckon it's for the best that they got it back. I wonder what the sachem will be up to next."

"Perhaps he will be up to getting away from there," suggested Stephen.

"Why so?"

"Don't you suppose that the Indians will suspect something wrong, and will make it too hot for him there?"

"Reckon not; Red Hawk knows well enough how to cover his trail. He will stay there as long as he wants to. Hello! What are the varmints yelping about now?"

The Shawnees could be heard yelling and whooping through the woods, as if they were running, their course being toward the river, in the direction of Alleyne's boat.

"They have found out the trick that your Delaware friend played on them," said Stephen, "and they are trying to catch him."

"Don't you believe that! The sachem is among them at this minute, hooting as loud as the wildest of them, unless he is busy at some other devilment. I'll tell you what the matter is. Somebody has got loose from them, and it is not Red Hawk."

"Can it be Susan? Is it possible that the women have escaped?"

"Not likely. I don't know what it is that the sachem can't do if he tries; but he would hardly try that. If the women folks should get loose, it would be easy enough to catch them, and they might suffer for it."

"It is Bat Archer, then. He is smart enough to get away from them if he has a fair chance. Was not that a splash in the water, near the shore?"

"Yes. He means to swim for it. Let us jump into your little boat and pull toward the shore. Perhaps we can help him."

In a moment they were in the dinky, and Stephen took the oars, while the scout seated himself at the bow, with his rifle in his hand. As they pushed off from the ark, they heard shots fired from the shore, mingled with the yells of the savages.

"They are after him right sharp," said Hardnett; "but, if they don't chance to hit him, and if he can swim well, he is safe."

Stephen made the little boat spin through the water, the scout directing its course. The shots and shouts ceased after a while, and they began to believe that the fugitive had been

hit, when a faint hail was heard down-stream. The boat was turned in the direction of the cry, and soon picked up Bat Archer, who, swimming with his clothes on, had become nearly exhausted.

"I would have gone down very soon, if you had not picked me up," said Bat, when he had been taken to the ark and supplied with dry clothes. "I had run myself out of breath on shore, and when I jumped into the river I thought I had rather be drowned than taken by the Indians. When my clothes got soaked through, they seemed like so much lead hanging about me, and I could hardly move my limbs."

"We were on the look-out for you," replied Stephen; "but I am afraid we would have missed you if you had not hailed us. How did you get loose?"

"I was sitting on the ground, my hands and feet tied with hickory bark, when there was a noise at the bank, and most of the Indians ran over there. An Indian stepped up to me then, and the bark on my wrists and ankles was cut before I knew it. He pointed toward the woods and toward the river, and disappeared as if he had sunk into the ground."

"That was Red Hawk," remarked Buck Hardnett.

"I ran away, of course, as I could do nothing to help mother and Sue while the Indians had me, and there might be a chance if I could get free. I had a hard run for it; but I reached the river, and here I am."

"It was one of the sachem's tricks. That is just his way of working. He may show them another before he is done."

"They will suspect that something is wrong now, and they may find him out," suggested Stephen.

"Not before he gets through with them, I warrant you. It's precious little satisfaction they will get out of Red Hawk. Miss Margaret, your eyes are sharper than ours, as well as brighter. Can you tell us what is going on at the boat up yonder?"

"I believe it is moving out," replied Margaret.

"Yes, ma'am; and I think that I can see some red-skins, who are moving out with it."

"Only a few."

"Only a few in sight; but there may be plenty hid in the boat. It is likely that there are."

"Do you think they are coming after us?" asked Stephen.

"It looks as if they mean to try it."

"Shall I pull up the anchor?"

"Why not stay here and fight them?" inquired Bat, in whose thoughts revenge was uppermost. "We will have as good a chance as they will."

"We have talked that matter over," replied the scout, "and we concluded that we can do nothing but cut and run, if they are really coming after us. But I have my doubts whether will they go far."

"Why do you say that?"

"Because we hear nothing from Red Hawk. It is certain now, that he is there with them."

"Perhaps as a prisoner," interrupted Stephen.

"Red Hawk a prisoner! You don't know that red-skin, Mr. Alleyne. If there was any pressing danger, he would let us know in some way. At all events, there can be no harm in waiting a little while, until we see what is going to happen."

All strained their eyes in the direction of the Good Hope, to discover the object of the Indians. They saw that the boat was headed out into the stream, and then they faintly heard a cracking sound, quickly followed by another.

"What's that?" asked the scout.

"The oars are broken, I am sure," replied Bat Archer. "The boat is whirling around, and the red-skins don't know what to do. There goes another crack, and I'll bet my head that it's the steering oar. It's mighty queer, too, that the oars should break. Tom Blodgett and I have had hold of one of them together pretty often, and more than two men can't work at them. We are no babies; but the oars never showed a sign of cracking when we pulled our best. Now all three have snapped together. Those red-skins must be stouter men than I ever met, or something else was the matter."

"It's another of Red Hawk's tricks. I was sure we would hear from him if there was any danger of the Shawnees coming down on us. He had *fixed* the oars, so he knew they couldn't go far. There is no more danger to-night, as I think, and some of us had better get some rest."

The scout was pressed to take some sleep, and consented to lie down at the bow of the boat, while Stephen Alleyne kept

watch. He showed his hunter's training by dropping to sleep in an instant, not even the dark eyes of Margaret Alleyne being able to keep him awake.

All was quiet on land and water, as far as Stephen Alleyne could hear; but the scout had not slept an hour, when he suddenly awoke, sat up, and looked out over the water. The moon had set, and the night was quite dark. Stephen Alleyne had not heard the least sound, except the slight chirp of a cricket. It might have seemed strange to him, if he had thought, that a cricket should be out on the water; but he had not thought of that, nor had he supposed that such a little noise could awake the scout.

But Buck Hardnett had been awakened by that very chirp, and, as he leaned his elbow on the gunwale, looking out on the dark water, the same small, shrill, piercing sound was heard again. He replied by a similar chirp, and a canoe shot out of the darkness, and came alongside of the Promised Land. The scout tied the canoe, while a tall young Indian stepped aboard and seated himself, and the inmates of the ark turned out to see the new-comer.

"Had they got on your trail, sachem?" asked Hardnett.

"No, I had been with them long enough."

"You had done all you could, I reckon, and had learned all you wanted to know. I have heard of some of your doings, and can guess the rest."

"Can the Heavy Hand guess these?" asked the Delaware, as he reached down into the canoe, and held up two rifles with their equipments.

"Well, I hadn't thought of those. Two rifles must have had two owners, who wouldn't have let you carry them away if they had been living to prevent it. You can't have been up yonder? No; we left three rifles there, and you haven't had time to go. I judge, sachem, that you have put an end to two more Shawnees. Is it so?"

The Delaware nodded.

"Tell us how it was."

Red Hawk briefly related his adventures with the two warriors who had been left in charge of the Good Hope.

"I tell you, sachem, you are a wonderful man, and I have good cause to know it. You have done more than two men's

work this night, and the folks at the settlements shall hear of it. What a roasting the Shawnees would give you, if they could only catch you!"

Red Hawk smiled at his friend's compliment, especially at the latter part of it, and explained to Bat Archer, in reply to his earnest inquiries, the manner in which he had "fixed" the oars of the Good Hope when the Shawnees started on their hostile expedition.

"Two more gone," said Buck Hardnett, musingly. "That leaves forty-five of 'em, according to my count."

"Take off five more before morning," replied Red Hawk.

"How's that, sachem?"

The Delaware told his friends of the five warriors who were to go up the river, to follow the trail of the three spies who had been killed, and proposed to go in advance of the five warriors and lay a trap for them.

"I am afraid we are too late. There is time enough before sunrise; but I am thinking they will have too much the start of us."

"No. They will follow the trail, and the trail is old. A canoe has no trail to follow, and is swift."

"Perhaps you are right. I hope you are. If we can get ahead of them, we will be likely to give a good account of them. I would be glad to get those rifles, too. We will try it, sachem."

All volunteered for this expedition; but the scout accepted only Bat Archer, whose heart was hot for revenge. The dinky would carry but three men, and he believed that three good white men were a match for any five Shawnees.

Bat took the oars, Red Hawk seated himself in the bow, Hardnett occupied the stern, and the dinky quietly shot over to the south side of the river. There they rowed up-stream along the bank, the darkness concealing them from inquisitive eyes on the other shore. When the scout judged that they were opposite the scene of the previous night's encounter, the dinky was headed across the river, landed, and concealed under some bushes that grew over the bank.

Bat Archer had rowed rapidly. They had not been much more than half an hour coming from the ark, and the five Shawnees, as Red Hawk calculated, had had about half an

hour's start of them. The dinky had been the first to reach the spot, as an examination disclosed the fact that the bodies of the slain Shawnees remained where they had been concealed. It was only necessary to make such arrangements that the five warriors might be secured with as little ceremony as possible.

The scout formed his plan immediately, and explained it to his companions. Bidding them to hide in the bushes and watch their chances, he descended the bank to the place where the bodies had been concealed. He knew that the five warriors would follow the trail of their friends, which would lead them to the bank above him, and eventually must bring them down to the water's edge. In that event he meant to attack them in front, while Red Hawk and Archer would close in upon their rear.

As the Delaware had said, the trail was an old one, comparatively, and the Shawnees were compelled, especially as it was quite dark, to follow it slowly. Their foes had been waiting for them nearly half an hour when they came in sight. In fact, they did not "come in sight" then, as they were obliged to follow the trail past the little bend, and then to trace it back until it brought them to the spot where the three spies had encamped the previous night.

As they came out upon the horse-shoe, they looked around them cautiously, and examined the ground carefully, turning up the leaves with their fingers, and scrutinizing every twig and stick. At last one of them discovered some spots of blood on a leaf. Not content with the evidence of his eyesight, he smelled the spots and tasted them. He then passed the leaf around among his companions, who grunted in unison.

A more careful examination of the ground followed, and it was evident to Red Hawk, who understood their language that they believed their comrades had been killed at that spot. It remained for them to search for the bodies, and a trace was found that led down the bank to the river. It was then agreed that one of their number should go down to the river to see what was to be seen there, while the others should wait upon the bank.

The time had come for Buck Hardnett to play his part, and he was ready. Crouching low in his concealment, within reach

of the bodies, with his knife in his hand, he waited in silence for his foe.

Cautiously the Shawnee descended the bank, looking and feeling for the trail as he went. Dark as the night was, he did not lose it, and it brought him to the water's edge, close to the place where Buck Hardnett was concealed. He raised the bushes under which the bodies lay, and saw them there in a heap. He put out his hand and touched them, uttering a low, guttural exclamation.

His last breath went with that "ugh!" The grip of the stalwart scout was on his throat, compressing his wind-pipe, and rendering respiration impossible. Before he could begin to struggle, the knife of the scout was in his heart, and he sunk to the ground, a corpse. It was murderous work; but it was the style of warfare which the white man had been compelled, in self-defense, to learn from the Indian.

Hardnett threw the body under the bushes with the others, and awaited the next development.

Red Hawk and Bat Archer, securely concealed, had watched the Indians on the bank, and waited for Hardnett to give them the signal to attack. Hearing nothing from him, they concluded that all was working well, and that they must still wait.

The Shawnees, in the mean time, became uneasy concerning their comrade. They looked over the bank, but neither saw nor heard any thing but the rush of the dark water. They called him, but received no reply. At last one of them, the tallest and strongest, if not the bravest of the five, volunteered to go down and look for him.

He descended the bank, following the trail as the other had done, and stopped at the little pool of blood which the ground had refused to soak up. As he halted, Buck Hardnett sprung upon him with a tomahawk; but the scout's foot slipped in the blood, and he missed his blow. The Shawnee shouted his war-cry, and grappled with his antagonist.

Then it was that the immense strength of Buck Hardnett came into play, and served him well. Dropping his tomahawk, he grasped the Indian so that he could not move his arms, lifted him bodily, and threw him with great force upon the ground. Before the Shawnee could recover from the

shock, the scout had picked up a tomahawk and dashed out his brains.

The yell of the Shawnee had startled both his friends and his enemies. His three companions hastened to the edge of the bank, to see what was the matter, just as Red Hawk and Bat Archer rushed out upon them, the one with a tomahawk and the other with a clubbed rifle. Archer struck for vengeance, and struck well, felling his adversary at a blow, and the Delaware, who never missed his aim, struck equally as well. The remaining Shawnee, seeing the fall of his friends, and believing that he was surrounded by enemies, turned and fled into the woods like a frightened deer. Red Hawk, fearing that he might escape, instantly leveled his rifle, and shot him down.

The work was over. The bodies of the Shawnees were left where they had fallen, the dinky was brought out from its concealment, the rifles of the slain Indians were placed in it, and the conquerors hastened across the river, just as the gray light of dawn became visible in the east.

"It is not worth while to try to hide now," said Buck Hardnett, as the boat dropped down along the southern bank. "The yelling and firing have given those red-skins to understand that something is the matter, and they may as well know who have done the work."

"Ten Shawnees gone," suggested Red Hawk.

"Yes, with the two that you saved last night. Our work counts up pretty well, and this has been a dear war-path for the rascals. But there are forty of them left, as I calculate, and those are more than we can manage."

It was not yet fairly light when the party reached Stephen Alleyne's boat, where they were warmly congratulated on their victory and their safe return.

CHAPTER VII.

THE OTHER SIDE.

AMOS DARNEL was no such a fool—not he, indeed!—as to run the risks that were run by many emigrants to the new paradise of Kentucky. He was possessed of money and goods, and he was determined that his property should reach its journey's end safely, in spite of the depredations of marauding Indians.

A thriving merchant, in a small village, he had sought the hand of pretty Sue Archer, and his suit had been decidedly rejected; but he did not despair, even after her engagement with Stephen Alleyne was made public. When he learned that Mr. Archer and his family were about to emigrate to Kentucky, he sold out his business, with the intention of following them. He changed his intention and preceded them. It was a risky attempt to a middle-aged man, such as Amos Darnel was; but, when he thought of Sue Archer, even his money-getting schemes were turned topsy-turvy.

Resolved to run no more risks than were necessary, he divided his property, sending the bulkier portion down the river, on a barge that was well-manned and guarded by soldiers. With his money and a few articles of value, he took the "wilderness route," accompanied by a guide and a hunter.

His plan succeeded in part. His property on the barge arrived safely at its destination; but he was so unfortunate as to meet a party of Shawnee warriors, returning from an incursion into Kentucky. The hunter was killed, the guide escaped, and Amos Darnel was carried across the Ohio as a prisoner. With him was taken such of his "plunder" as the Indians chose to carry away, and his captors compelled him to bear a load of it on his back until he reached the Shawnee towns.

As he was the only captive that had been taken by the expedition, it was at first decided to burn him; but he was not

a great brave ; in fact, the Shawnee warriors said that there would be no pleasure in burning such a coward. By way of diversion, and for the purpose of trying his mettle, they gave him a sound whipping, and he was eventually sent to the Ohio, with a party of warriors who contemplated making war upon emigrant boats.

When the party reached the river, the object of the expedition was explained to the captive, who was told that it would be necessary for him to play the part of a white man in distress, standing upon the bank while the Indians were concealed in the bushes, and thus lure passing boats to the shore.

Amos Darnel had not been noted as a mean man, although his cowardly nature and his stinginess in money matters were well known. His feelings at once revolted against such an act of baseness, and he flatly refused to become a decoy for the purpose of leading his countrymen into danger. He was then tied up and whipped, until he promised submission to his masters, and the result of his first effort as a decoy has been related.

When he recognized the people on the Good Hope, and when he saw Mr. Archer and Tom Blodgett shot down and scalped, he perceived the enormity of his deed, and was so overcome by shame and contrition, that he wished to hide from the sight of men. But when he saw Sue Archer brought on shore, and recognized Stephen Alleyne on the deck of the other boat, a revulsion of feeling came over him. He began to think that his chances for the possession of Sue Archer might be better, after all, than if, accompanied by her accepted lover, she had quietly settled down in Kentucky. In the course of his years of trading he had had dealings, some of which would not have been sanctioned by the Continental authorities, with the British traders and agents in Detroit. He believed that his credit and influence would be sufficiently good at that post to secure the ransom of himself and Sue, and he would not trouble himself particularly with regard to what might be said about the matter, if he might call the girl his own. He felt that he was ready to join the Shawnees, to become a foe to his fellow white men, to give up every thing, even his property, to secure that end.

He did not see his way clear to the accomplishment of his object; but he supposed that Sue Archer, together with himself, would be taken to the Shawnee village, and he hoped that he would there find opportunity to ingratiate himself with the chief and principal men of the tribe. In the mean time, as he was not allowed full liberty of motion, he contented himself with observing the movements of the Indians.

He saw the action of Red Hawk, that resulted in the release of Bat Archer. Presuming that the Indian was a Shawnee, he naturally concluded that there was a traitor in the camp. Having no objection to the escape of the young man, but preferring, in fact, that he should be out of the way, Darnel kept his knowledge to himself, thinking that he might at some time make it available for the purpose of propitiating the savages.

He watched the Indian who had so adroitly effected the release of Bat Archer, and came to the conclusion that he was engaged in more mischief. When the Shawnees suspected that there was a spy in their camp, and a council was held to consider the matter, Darnel noticed that the object of his suspicion was not present at the count, and he was then sure that his information would be valuable to the Shawnee chief.

He sought the chief, who was in command of the party, and introduced the subject by saying that he wished to speak to him on a matter of importance.

Senapco, who had small respect for the trader, treated his statements with little attention, until Darnel declared that he had seen an Indian cut the bonds of the white captive who had escaped, and that the same Indian had not been present when the enumeration of the party was taken.

The chief called some of the warriors to listen to the trader's account, and as it was generally believed that some secret enemy had been operating among them, the matter was thought to be worthy of investigation. An examination was made of the ground about where Bat Archer had been seated, in the belief that the cut bark would be found there; but nothing of the kind was discovered. This circumstance told strongly against the trader's story; but he adhered so stoutly to his statement, and Senapco was so well convinced that

there was treachery somewhere, that it was determined to send a party to scour the woods in the vicinity of the camp, to search for the place of concealment of the missing Indian.

The search had not been long continued, when a howl from the scouting party proclaimed that they had made a discovery, though it was evident that it was something different from what they had hoped to find. They soon returned to the camp, bringing the bodies of the two men who had been left in charge of the boat, and reporting that the canoe that had been attached to the boat had disappeared.

Amos Darnel was again examined, with regard to the dress and appearance of the supposed spy. As he mentioned the style of his moccasins, the warriors who had gone to the boat, and who had noticed the "sign" in the mud, nodded to each other and confirmed his statements.

"Delaware!" ejaculated an old warrior, whose opinion was entitled to weight.

"A dog of a Delaware!" angrily replied Senapco. "It must be Red Hand, the young sachem, the chief with no people, who has joined the Long-knives, and who goes on the war-path with Heavy Hand, one of their great braves. They are always together, and one of them may yet be near the camp."

There could be no doubt that one man had gone off in the canoe; but one set of tracks had been seen, and the Shawnees thought it likely that another was concealed on shore. The scouting-party was again sent out to search for the supposed enemy.

This second investigation had hardly been commenced when the Shawnees were startled by the faint sound of a yell, proceeding from up the river, quickly followed by the report of a rifle.

Senapco was surprised and troubled. The mysterious occurrences of the night had affected him strangely, causing him to believe that sleepless and active enemies were about and among his party, and that no vigilance could detect or prevent their insidious assaults. The five warriors who had been sent on the trail of the missing spy had doubtless encountered opposition, and the chief was inclined to believe that he was

surrounded by foes, who might be expected, at any time, to close in and destroy his party. Disheartened by this view of affairs, he was ready nearly to abandon the expedition and return to his village.

The yell had not been repeated, nor had the rifle-shot been followed by another report. This seemed ominous to the chief, as, if the Shawnees had been victorious, they would have raised the scalp-halloo. But it was possible that the contest was not yet decided, that both parties were seeking to gain the advantage, and a number of warriors were sent off at full speed, to the assistance of their comrades.

Still, nothing more was heard from the supposed scene of action, and all was doubt and anxiety among the Shawnees, until it was announced that a boat was descending the river, under cover of the opposite shore.

It was now daylight. A small boat could plainly be seen, leisurely making its way down the stream, and all eyes were strained to determine who and what were its occupants. There were sharp-sighted men among the Shawnees, and the most experienced warriors were soon convinced that the boat contained two persons who were well known and particularly obnoxious to them—Red Hawk, the Delaware, and Heavy Hand, the Long-knife scout. The third was supposed to be the white captive who had escaped during the night.

This discovery helped to explain the recent untoward events ; but there was still a mystery connected with them, that was not explained until the warriors returned from up the river, reporting the slaughter of eight men, whose bodies they had found and buried. No scalps had been taken, proving to the Shawnees that the work had been done by Heavy Hand and Red Hawk, neither of whom was in the habit of taking Shawnee scalps.

This was a heavy blow to Senapco and his warriors ; but there was some consolation in the fact that they now knew with whom they had to deal, and that their enemies, though formidable enough, were not as numerous as they had supposed them to be. Heavy Hand and Red Hawk were fully capable of doing all the mischief that had been done, and it was presumed that they were the secret enemies who had been acting with such effect against the Shawnees. They had

been watched, as the Shawnees were unable to pursue them, until they had been seen to go on board of Stephen Alleyne's boat, which was thereafter made an object of special surveillance.

Senapco was determined on revenge, and his warriors eagerly seconded his desire. If they could obtain possession of two such hated enemies of their tribe as Heavy Hand and Red Hawk, they might return in triumph, notwithstanding their losses. To achieve this object, it was necessary that an immediate attack should be made upon Stephen Alleyne's boat, and that it should be so made that none of the occupants could escape.

The first requisite was to bring the captured boat up to the camp, where it could be put in order and have a fair start for an attack. A sufficient force was detailed to "cordell" the Good Hope along the bank, while others busied themselves in preparing oars and sweeps.

Amos Darnel conceived that this was a good opportunity for making himself known to Sue Archer, with a view to his plans for the future. Since he had manifested his friendly disposition by telling what he knew of the presence of Red Hawk in the camp, the Indians had allowed him more liberty, and had treated him with more consideration. He had been permitted to dress himself in some garments that had been taken from the Good Hope, and again presented a respectable appearance. His spirits were raised by the revival of his hopes and his return to decent attire, and it was with a self-sufficient air that he presented himself before the captive girl.

It was evident that she recognized him; but she received him with a look of indignant contempt which told him that he had nothing to expect from her favor.

"Yes, I do know you, Amos Darnel," was her cold reply to his salutation. "I can't say that I want to know you any better or any worse. I knew you too well when you acted as a tool for these savages, to lure our boat to the shore, and to murder my father and poor Tom Blodgett."

"It was not my fault," protested Darnel, while his reddening face showed that he was not incapable of shame. "I was forced to it by torture and threats of death; but nothing would have forced me had I known it was your father's boat."

"A very lame excuse, Mr. Darnel. Such as it is, it is hard for me to believe it, when I see you free and unharmed, strutting about in my murdered father's coat."

"I didn't know whose it was," muttered Darnel, reddening again. "The Indians took every thing from me, and my clothes were torn off by the bushes and briers."

"If the Indians have treated you so badly, it is strange that you are in such great favor with them. You are alive, while my poor father is dead. You are free, while my mother and I are bound, to be carried away to captivity or death."

"You need not fear that, Miss Susan. It is true that I have made friends with the Indians; but it is only for your benefit that I have done so. You will be taken to their villages; but I will find friends among the English who trade with them, and then I can purchase your release."

"Perhaps you mean to say that you would *purchase* me from them. I can hardly believe that it was for such a purpose you caused my father to be murdered; but I am afraid of you, Amos Darnel. I am afraid that your friendship would be such as the wolf shows to the lamb. There is blood on your hands, and it would stain me if I should touch them. I want no help from bloody hands."

"It is the only help you will get," angrily replied the trader, "and you will be obliged to accept it, whether you want it or not. You needn't look for any help from that boat in the river; for the Indians will have it, with every soul on board."

"What boat do you mean?" asked Sue, shuddering, as a new fear came over her.

"I mean Stephen Alleyne's boat. The hair-brained boy has anchored off there in the channel, for no purpose but to lose his scalp, and the Indians will soon have it."

"If you were really a friend, you might warn him of his danger, and advise him to escape."

Darnel was about to reply, when a warrior stepped up, who told him that the chief wished to see him immediately. He hastened to Senapco, and learned that a runner, who had been left at a point up the river, had just arrived, bringing the information that another boat was in sight, descending the river. The trader at once offered his advice and services to the chief, for the purpose of capturing the boat.

CHAPTER VIII.

TIMELY AID.

WHEN Buck Hardnett and his two companions reached Stephen Alleyne's boat, their first care, after receiving the congratulations of their friends upon their victory, was to partake of some refreshment that was prepared for them by the willing hands of Margaret Alleyne. Their next business was, to light their pipes, relate their achievements to those who had remained on the boat, and consult with them concerning the situation of affairs.

Stephen Alleyne and Bat Archer were strongly inclined to believe, since ten of the Shawnees had been picked off, that they might safely risk an attack from the rest of the party but Hardnett was of quite a different opinion.

"The odds are much too big yit," he said.

"But the boat will hardly hold more than twenty of the red-skins," suggested Bat.

"True enough, and we are six men, with nine extra guns. That gives us, I believe, fifteen shots without loading. It would all be very well, if we had the 'vantage of the red-skins, or if we could see them while we shoot our fifteen shots. But we won't have a chance at them, on that boat, until they get right aboard of us, and then, you must know, it will be a hand-to-hand scramble. What does the sachem think about it?"

Red Hawk agreed with his friend, and Alleyne and Archer were compelled to abandon their opinion, which had been advanced rather because they wished it to be true, than because they believed in it.

"What are we to do, then?" inquired Stephen. "We ought to try and help our friends on shore. The Indians may soon leave the river, and then our chances will be gone."

"They won't be in a hurry, I reckon. The sachem thinks that they mean to stay about the river a while, until they can get a chance to strike another blow. They have lost ten warriors, you know, and they would hate to go home without

getting revenge in some way. It is my opinion they will try to take this boat, as soon as they can make ready."

"And then we will have to run away."

"Like enough; but we can worry them some as we go. As we can do nothing but worry them, we ought to do as much of that as we can."

"How can we worry them?"

"They can't catch this boat without rowing, and we may get some good shots at the men who handle the sweeps."

"How will that help our friends on shore?"

"Not much, I allow. We must try another plan to help them."

"Now you are coming to the point. What shall the plan be?"

"We must get a force from the settlements, as I meant to do just before the other boat was taken. Red Hawk is a fast traveler, and no man can find a shorter way than he can. He can go to Limestone in a little while, and the folks will turn out, I know, with Si Kenton at the head of them, to break up this gang of red-skins. Then we can take them on two sides, and be sure that nobody gets away."

"The Delaware must be too tired for such work. He was busy all night, and he has not slept."

"He is used to that. He can do without sleeping and eating, and a heap of things that are necessary to settlement folks."

As Red Hawk was willing, it was settled that he should go ashore in the canoe, and take the nearest route to Limestone.

"Those Shawnees will be watching us now, sachem," said Hardnett. "Since they have found out who has been worrying them, they will keep their eyes on this boat, to find out all we do and mean to do. I don't know that there will be any harm done if they see you, as they will be likely to think that you have gone over there to kill a deer; but it will be just as well to keep out of their sight, if you can manage to do so."

The Delaware nodded as he stepped into the dug-out, and paddled swiftly away, guiding the canoe so as to keep the ark between him and the Shawnee camp. His friends watched

him until he had reached the shore and concealed the canoe, and then turned their attention to the opposite bank, where the Indians were found busily engaged in "cordelling" the Good Hope up the river toward their encampment. A portion of them were "tailed on" to the cable, and were slowly hauling the boat against the current, while others kept it off from the bank with poles.

"I suppose you know what that means, Mr. Alleyne," remarked the scout.

"They mean to make another attempt to attack us, and want to get the boat far enough up to take a good start."

"That's the notion, I reckon. The sachem was right, as he always is. The scalps and plunder on this boat are mighty tempting to them, and they don't mean to go home without trying to strike another blow."

"Then we will have to run away, and where will we be when help comes from the settlements?"

"Not very far off, perhaps. It will take them some time to rig sweeps and put the boat in order, and help may come in some way before they are ready to start out. We mustn't forget that we've always got Providence to look to. If they chase us down the river, there's another thing that might be done."

"What is that?"

"I judge from what I have seen and heard so far, that you had rather lose this boat and her cargo, than lose that girl who is a prisoner on shore."

"You are right. The boat and cargo would not be worth thinking of. I would lose my life, rather than that she should be carried away by the Indians."

"If it should come to the worst, and we should see that they were going to drive us too far away, we might run ashore and leave this boat to them."

"What would we gain by that?"

"We might take the back track, at the best speed we could make, and rout up their camp before they knew what the matter was. If we could come in the rear of the camp, and take it by surprise; our chance would be good, as five men, with fourteen guns, would count in such a scrimmage as that."

"It would be a bold move, but dangerous," suggested Stephen, with a significant glance at his sister.

"I could hide *her*, where the red-skins would never find her, but I am free to confess that it would be a risky business."

"I hope you will give yourselves no uneasiness about me," said Margaret. "I can travel as fast as any of you, and I can use a rifle, too."

"She's the right sort—the right sort!" exclaimed the scout, whose admiring glance spoke more than his words.

"But it may not come to that," he continued, as he rose and looked toward the shore. "I was only speaking of what might be done, if the worst should happen, and I don't think it will come to that. It seems to me that those red-skins have taken some other sort of a notion. They have stopped hauling up the boat, and things look lively about the camp."

"Some of them have gone further up the river," said Margaret.

"Bless your bright eyes! You see every thing. There goes another lot in the same direction. I would give something big now, if I had it to give, to know what's in the wind."

"Here's our canoe coming back!" eagerly exclaimed Bat Archer. "The Delaware is paddling, and there is another man in the canoe."

"There's something up now, sure!" replied the scout, as he fastened his eyes on the approaching canoe. "What! is it possible? As I live, that is Si Kenton in the canoe with him!"

As the canoe touched the ark, Hardnett gave his hand to a tall and muscular man, who lightly stepped on board. He was dressed in hunter's garb, with the usual equipments, and his appearance was quite prepossessing. Then in the prime of his life and vigor, he had been for many years renowned as a hunter and Indian-fighter, though his mild blue eyes and pleasant countenance by no means indicated a bloodthirsty disposition.

"You seem glad to see me, Buck," he said, in a soft voice and with a good-humored smile.

"I am glad indeed, Captain Kenton, and so are my friends here. Where did you drop from?"

"There are twenty of us out. We are expecting a boat down the river, loaded with salt and other articles, and have come up to meet her, as we heard that the red-skins are getting troublesome."

"You have come just in time. Twenty men can do good work here. Where did you meet the sachem?"

"We captured him, or were captured by him, just below. He has told us all that has happened here, and I have a plan by which I think we can make a clean sweep of that gang of red-skins."

"What is it?"

"I have sent a man up the river, as the boat can't be far off, to bring her to land. I must take you ashore with me, I believe, and leave Red Hawk here with your friends."

"Why not take more of us?"

"The boat may not hold so many."

"What boat?" asked the bewildered man.

"The boat I am looking for. Don't you see what I am driving at, man? I want to bring that boat to land at some point above here, and conceal my men aboard of her. Then we must float down, so as to give the red-skins a good chance to decoy us in to the shore. If they do it, they may, be pretty badly fooled. If they don't, we will land, anyhow near the other boat, and take them as we can get them."

"That plan ought to work well, if it can be done without showing our force. I wouldn't be surprised, from the movements of the red-skins lately, if they have sighted the boat up the river."

"Very likely. This craft will be in no danger, until they get that job off their hands. Come, if you want to help. There is no time to lose."

Alleyne and Archer wished to join the party; but Kenton and Hardnett declared that there would be plenty of men without them, and Red Hawk strongly advised them to remain where they were.

The two scouts went ashore in the canoe, keeping out of sight of the Shawnees as much as possible, and hastened to join their friends, who were waiting for them in the forest. The party then traveled rapidly up the river, and, in less than two hours' walking, came in sight of the expected boat, which was nearing the land on the south shore.

This boat was a covered barge, an oblong box being built from end to end, to cover the freight and protect the men, while a "running board" was left at each side, for the convenience of the boatmen when they were obliged to pole against the current. It was soon made fast to the shore,

and Kenton went on board to meet the boatmen, with whom he was well acquainted, and to whom he explained his design against the Shawnee marauders. Like most men of their class, they were overjoyed at the prospect of a fight, and preparations were at once made to carry the plan into effect.

As it was probable that the Shawnees were constantly watching the boat, the men used great caution on going on board, so that they should not be seen from the opposite shore. When all were embarked, after a short delay, the barge was cut loose, and proceeded on her way down-stream.

It was not thought that the landing of the barge would interfere with Kenton's plan, as the Indians would suppose that the boatmen had merely gone ashore to procure wood or water or game. To make appearances more deceitful, one of the boatmen was stationed on the roof with a fiddle, from which he extracted melodious strains as the barge slowly floated down the river, the man at the steering-oar purposely guiding her toward the north shore.

CHAPTER IX.

WINNING AND LOSING.

As Buck Hardnett supposed, the Indians had "sighted" the barge, before it came in view of the white men who had been sent up to meet it. Leaving a guard in charge of the camp, more than half had gone further up the river, so that their operations should not be hindered by those who were on board of Stephen Alleyne's boat. Amos Darnel, already high in the favor of the chief, accompanied them, to play his part in the expected tragedy. Having reached a favorable position, they concealed themselves in the forest, and the decoy took his station on the bank.

The white men on the barge were not behind the Indian warriors in making preparations for the conflict. They had cut loop-holes in the side of the box that covered the boat, through which, with their loaded rifles ready at hand, they

narrowly watched the woods for signs of their red enemies. The steersman, in the mean time, gradually brought the boat closer to the north shore, and the fiddler on deck continued his merry music.

The heavy-laden barge floated well; but it was not until the afternoon was nearly gone that she approached the spot where the Indians were concealed. As soon as she was fairly in sight, Amos Darnel began to run up and down the bank, beckoning and making signals of distress. The steersman brought the barge nearer to the shore, and the eager riflemen kept a bright look-out at the loop-holes.

"That is the same fellow who brought the other boat on shore," muttered Buck Hardnett. "I believe that he ought to be the first man shot."

"Don't shoot him," replied Kenton. "We will get hold of him after a while, and I had rather have him alive than dead."

The boatmen, who had been duly instructed, called to Darnel as soon as they were within hailing distance, and asked what he wanted. His story was similar to that which he had told to Nathan Archer, and he piteously begged them to bring the boat to the shore, that he might get aboard. The fiddler descended from his station, and got under cover. The steersman, with a sweep of his oar, brought the boat head on toward the bank, so that he was screened from the Shawnee bullets, and, as the bow touched the shore, he directed Darnel to jump aboard and shove off.

But the decoy had already disappeared in the forest, and in his place appeared a swarm of half-naked and painted warriors, who sprung forward, with terrific yells, from every tree and bush.

As they reached the bank, before they had time to wonder at the silence that prevailed on the barge, or at the fact that no white men were visible, the fire from a dozen unerring rifles flashed out from the side of the boat, literally knocking them back and driving them to the woods. The men who had not fired hastened up the bank to pursue the astonished enemy, and the others swiftly followed them, after making fast the boat and reloading their rifles.

The Shawnees had been badly hurt, as well as badly fright-

ened; but they soon recovered from their scare, perceiving that their opponents were not more numerous than themselves, sought cover behind the trees, and made a resolute stand. It was necessary that they should do so, and they fought desperately, appreciating the necessity. They would be overwhelmed with shame and mortification, if they should abandon, by retreating, the plunder that they had already taken, and forego the rich harvest which they had believed to be almost within their power. It would go hard with them, also, if the loss of so many warriors should remain unavenged. They had left a number of men at the camp, who would be attracted by the continued firing, and whose speedy arrival would turn the scale of battle in their favor.

"This is pretty hard work, captain," said Hardnett, whose tree was near that behind which Kenton had sheltered himself.

"Hot enough; but I expected hard fighting. We will get them yet."

"There are more of them about who will soon be up."

"Not too many for us, I hope. Can't you take half a dozen men, and get around behind them? A brisk attack in the rear would help our chances greatly."

"I'll try. Hello! What's up down yonder?"

"What *can* it be?"

It was a continuous firing and yelling, in the direction of the Shawnee camp, that attracted the attention of the borderers.

"Don't you know what's the matter?" asked Hardnett. "It is one of Red Hawk's tricks. I thought it strange that the sachem was so ready to stay on the boat; but it seems that he had a plan of his own."

The firing and yelling were heard by the Indians as well as by the white men, and the effect was such as to produce a sort of panic among them. Naturally concluding that a flank attack had been made upon them, and that the warriors who had been left at the camp could not come to their assistance, they all commenced to retreat, and some of them fled in dismay.

This was the moment for the borderers, who saw their advantage and did not fail to press it. Cheered on by Kenton

and Hardnett, they sprung out from their covers, and rushed forward with yells as wild and ferocious as those of the savages. The retreat was thus turned into a rout, and the white men hastened to slaughter their flying foes and prevent them from rallying.

Most of the Shawnees, in spite of their panic, had sufficient presence of mind to take the course that led back to the camp, which they found deserted, with neither enemies nor friends to be seen. As they were driven beyond the camp, however, further back from the river, they were joined by some of their comrades who had been left at the camp. These warriors confessed that they had been seized with a panic, but did not know who or how many their enemies were. They had supposed that they were assailed by a large force, and, after several of them had fallen, the rest had incontinently fled; but they had not seen or heard of their enemies since they took to flight.

The main body of the Shawnees, finding themselves thus reinforced, and doubting whether the flank attack had been any thing more than a scare, were disposed to make a stand; but their victorious foes pressed them so closely that they were unable to unite, and they were still driven back into the forest.

The white men were as much in the dark as were the Shawnees with regard to the attack upon the camp, with the exception, perhaps, of Buck Hardnett, who could only suppose that Red Hawk had been "up to some of his tricks," and declare that the sachem knew what he was about.

"It is strange that we have not seen him or some of the others," said Kenton. "It's not likely that he made the attack alone, or that he drove the Indians off without any help."

"I don't know about that," replied Hardnett. "The sachem *might* have done it, and it wouldn't surprise me at all if he had done it alone; but Alleyne and Archer might have come ashore with him, and perhaps they did. They would want to do something for those two women, you know, and that may be what they are looking after now."

The two men had stopped to load their rifles and to rest for a moment, as the Indians were in full flight and they

were not needed in the pursuit. It occurred to them that it was growing late. In fact, the sun had set, and night was rapidly approaching.

"Hadn't we better call back the men, Buck?" asked Kenton. "It is getting dark, and they might scatter."

"Reckon we had, captain. The red-skins have got enough of it, I think. But the men are coming back of their own accord. Can any thing be the matter, I wonder?"

"You are right. They are coming back in a hurry, too. Let us run up and see what is the matter."

The first man who was met explained the situation of affairs.

"Runnin'! Reckon we *are* runnin'. We chased the red-skins until they come up on a fresh lot, and they sent us on the back track quicker'n winkin'."

"Can't we beat them back?"

"We'll be lucky if we git out of this alive. The boat is our only chance."

Kenton soon perceived that the man had spoken truly. The Shawnees had met another war-party, just from the north, who had at once joined them against the common enemy. As the reinforcement was composed of fresh men, outnumbering the whites, the latter were driven back in their turn, hotly pursued by their fiery antagonists. The woods were full of red-skins, and a rapid retreat was the only hope for the borderers.

Nevertheless, Kenton and Buck Hardnett succeeded in so far rallying their flying friends, that the retreat was conducted in an orderly manner. A dozen of the best men, acting as a rear guard, kept back the savages with their unerring rifles, until all had safely reached the boat.

"Hold on there!" shouted Hardnett, as the barge was about to be cut loose from the bank. "Stand ready with your rifles, boys, and keep the red-skins back a little longer."

In answer to the wondering inquiries of his comrades, he pointed to the shore, where could be dimly seen, in the growing darkness, the figure of a man and a woman, crouching under the bushes. There were Indians behind them, Indians on each side of them, and Indians between them and the

boat; but only the keen eye of Buck Hardnett had discovered them.

"That is Bob Archer," said the scout to Kenton, "and the woman with him must be his mother or sister. I will take a few men, and make a dash to bring them in, if the rest of you will cover us with your rifles."

Buck Hardnett had no difficulty in obtaining volunteers. The pioneers of Kentucky never stopped to count the odds when a woman was in danger. In a few moments the Shawnees, who were crowding to the river, were astonished by a sharp volley that was poured into them from the boat, and then half a dozen men went up the bank at a run, charging as boldly as if they had a regiment to back them.

Archer, seeing the way clear, and presuming that the attack had been made for his benefit, lifted the woman in his arms, and hastened to the boat. Hardnett, having accomplished the object of his movement, ordered his men to fall back, and they returned to the boat without serious difficulty, protected by the fire of their friends.

But the Shawnees, angered by seeing two possible victims snatched from under their very noses, and by the very impudent manner in which a few white men had driven them back, rushed at the boat in a body, determined on revenge. Most of the rifles of the white men were empty, and they were in a poor condition to repel this sudden and furious assault.

"This is no joke," said Hardnett, as he hastily rammed down a bullet. "We must cut the rope and take our chances."

The rope was cut as he spoke, and the barge drifted far enough from the bank to prevent the savages from jumping aboard; but the danger of the white men was hardly lessened. The current set in toward the shore at that point, so that the boat moved along within a short distance of the bank, and might any moment touch the land. It was impossible to use the sweeps, as no one could expose himself for a moment without being shot down by the infuriated savages who lined the bank.

Bullets were so rapidly rained in upon the side of the barge, piercing the light plank that formed the shelter, that the white men were compelled to lie down, or to shelter

themselves behind boxes and boards, and were unable to return the fire of their antagonists. Their situation was perilous indeed. At any moment the boat might touch the shore, in which event the savages would at once spring on board and have them at their mercy.

It was Bat Archer who proved himself the man for this crisis. Knocking a hole in the shelter, in the side next to the river, and taking a rope in his hand, he crawled out on the "running board," at the place where the row-boat belonging to the barge was hitched. Perceiving that there were two pairs of oars in the skiff, he called to one of the boatmen, to whom he briefly explained his plan.

The two took their places in the skiff, fastening the rope to the barge, and rowed off into the river, paying out but a little line, so as to keep the barge between them and the Indians on the bank. Having got into the right position, they pulled with a will, and soon had the satisfaction of seeing the barge change its course and slowly move out into the stream. Slowly at first, but surely, and more rapidly after a while, when the hull was fairly started.

This was inexplicable to the Shawnees, who saw the barge gradually leaving the bank, carrying their victims out of their reach, and who were unable to discover by what means it was propelled. Yelling with rage, they fired more rapidly into the craft, without eliciting any reply, and without stopping its sure and gradual motion. It was not until they had scattered themselves up and down the river, so that they were able to see the skiff behind the barge, that they perceived how their enemies were slipping away from them.

This discovery caused them to aim their rifles at the skiff, and their bullets splashed into the water around Bat Archer and his companion, who hastened to back up to the shelter of the barge. But the object of the rowers had been accomplished. The barge had sufficient impulse to carry it within the influence of another current, which quickly bore it out of the reach of arrows or bullets. The boatmen came out from their concealment and manned the sweeps, and the barge swept safely down the river, until it anchored alongside of Stephen Alleyne's boat.

CHAPTER XII.

THE FLANK ATTACK.

RED HAWK had made no objection to being left behind on the boat, when Kenton and Hardnett started on the expedition against the Shawnees. His comrade, who was well acquainted with his peculiarities, had wondered at this, but accounted for it by supposing that the Delaware absolutely felt the need of rest.

He was right in his supposition. The Delaware needed rest, and meant to take it; but his active mind was at work, and he already had a plan matured for active operations. After a few moments' conversation with Bat Archer, he laid down on the plank floor of the ark, and was asleep in an instant.

Archer, in the mean time, took his station at the bow with Stephen Alleyne, and watched for the boat from whose coming so much was expected. As soon as it appeared in sight, far up the river, he awoke Red Hawk.

The Delaware had no need to rub his eyes. As soon as he was touched he was on his feet, wide awake and eager for action. A single glance up the river told him all that he wished to know in that quarter, and he turned to Bat, pointing at the canoe that lay alongside the ark.

"Come," he said. "We may go to work now."

"I would like to know what this means," said Stephen, as the Delaware stepped into the canoe, and Archer handed him four rifles. "You two have some plan of your own, I perceive; but I don't know why you should count me out. At least tell me what you mean to do."

The Delaware nodded, in reply to Archer's inquiring glance.

"You have guessed well, Stephen," said Bat. "We have a little plan; but we can carry it out ourselves, and we thought it would be best for you to stay here and take care of your sister."

"That is very considerate, and perhaps you are right; but you may as well tell me the plan."

"It is Red Hawk's plan. He proposes to go ashore somewhere below the camp of the red-skins, and to creep up behind them, so as to be ready to take a hand when our friends at the river begin to fight. We will each take two rifles, and hope to give the reds such a volley as will make a little confusion among them. If the plan works well, we may be able to get mother and Sue out of their hands."

"The plan is a good one, and there is only one objection to it—that you are leaving me out. Six rifles would be much better than four, and you know very well that I have a personal interest in the matter."

"But there is Margaret."

"Margaret will be safe with Hall and Marks. It is not likely the Indians will trouble the boat, as they will have their hands full on shore. You needn't talk about it any more, as I mean to go with you, and you may hand a couple of rifles for me."

As Red Hawk did not object, Stephen Alleyne was permitted to make one of the party. But Archer, under the direction of the Delaware, rowed quartering down the river, striking the north shore considerably below the boat. The canoe was hauled up and concealed, and the three men struck out into the woods, each carrying two rifles.

The Delaware, by the tacit consent of his companions, took command of the expedition, and led the way to the Shawnee camp, approaching it from the lower side, a little to the rear. The Indians had a fire burning, the smoke of which would have guided them to the spot, had Red Hawk not been well acquainted with the locality.

But the guide knew every foot of the ground, and he was not likely to miss his way, anxious as he was to strike the unsuspecting Shawnees a hard blow. Archer and Alleyne, eager for revenge and for the rescue of those who were dear to him, followed in the steps of their leader, and obeyed his directions implicitly.

Reaching the edge of the slope some fifty yards from the camp-fire, they concealed themselves in the bushes, and looked down on their enemies. On the side of the fire next to them were eight Shawnees, some seated, some lying down, and one standing. Only two of them had their guns within reach

and it was evident that they were entirely unsuspecting of danger, expecting any thing rather than an attack in the rear.

On the further side, perhaps two hundred yards from the fire, was a sight that made Bat Archer's eyes flash, and caused Stephen Alleyne's heart to beat quicker. Mrs. Archer and Sue were seated there, on a little hillock, unbound, but guarded by four Indians. The old woman was leaning forward, apparently sunk in the deepest dejection, and her daughter was sitting upright, with her eyes looking above the tree-tops, as if she expected help from the skies. The Indian guards were lying about in negligent attitudes; but they, as well as their comrades by the camp-fire, kept their eyes turned toward the north-east, as if expecting to hear something from that direction.

They were waiting for the sound of rifle-shots from above, for the scalp-halloo and the yells of triumph, that would proclaim another victory achieved, by the basest of stratagems, over their hated enemies, the whites.

They were not the only men who were waiting. On the brow of the southern slope that bordered the camp, concealed by a thicket of bushes, were two white men and a Delaware Indian, crouching like panthers for a spring, their hearts thirsting for vengeance, each carrying two deaths in his hands, waiting for the guns that were to tell of the conflict on the river.

The signal came at last. The sharp crack of rifles was heard, followed by yelling and shouting; but the sounds were not such as the waiting Shawnees had expected to hear. Instead of yells of triumph, they listened to their comrades' cries of rage and dismay, mingled with the cheering of a large body of white men. They sprung to their feet, certain that their friends had been caught in a trap, but not knowing whether to go to their assistance or to remain where they were.

Red Hawk and his companions profited by the surprise and irresolution of their enemies to gain a position nearer to the camp-fire; where they leveled their rifles, each marking out a victim with unerring aim.

Three rifles cracked from the bushes, three bullets sped on their work of death, and three Shawnees fell to the ground

Archer and Alleyne loaded as quickly as possible, while the Delaware used the three remaining rifles with fatal effect.

The Indians at the foot of the slope ran for their guns, and fired a volley into the thicket; but they continued to fall under Red Hawk's well-directed fire, and the remnant, believing themselves attacked by a strong force, turned and fled hastily.

Not quite so badly frightened were those who were guarding the captives. They fired at the thicket, and seemed determined to stand their ground. But by this time three rifles were again loaded, and Red Hawk and his companions dashed down the slope while the guns of their foes were empty.

Two of the guards instantly fled; but two remained. One of these threw his tomahawk at Mrs. Archer, who had broken away at the sight of her friends, and had run toward them. A rifle cracked as the tomahawk flew by her head, and the Shawnee fell. The next instant the old lady was in the arms of her son.

Sue Archer, in the mean time, was struggling to free herself from the remaining Shawnee, who was striving to drag her away with one hand, while with the other he threatened her with his tomahawk. Alleyne and the Delaware could not shoot, for fear of killing her, and they pressed forward anxiously, every moment expecting that the savage would fulfill his threat.

Suddenly a new actor appeared upon the scene. A white man—or a man with a white skin, and in the garb of civilization—came running through the woods. He seized the girl, and, with the help of the Indian, hurried her off into the forest.

Alleyne fired his rifle, uselessly, and hastened after the fugitives with Red Hawk; but they had made only a little progress, when their way was stopped by a crowd of retreating Shawnees, at the sight of whom they were compelled to fall back as speedily as possible. Reaching the spot where Bat Archer had been left with his mother, they found themselves out of the way of their enemies, and halted a moment to consult together.

"Did you see that white man, Bat?" hurriedly asked Alleyne.

"The man who ran off with Susan? Yes. Didn't you know him?"

"I thought I did, but was not sure."

"It was Amos Darnel, the same man who decoyed our boat to the shore."

"The scoundrel! I would not have thought that he could be so mean. I would have had his life, if we had not run into such a crowd of Indians. Were they not running from our friends, Red Hawk?"

"Yes."

"And they are running yet. Come on! We must not lose a chance. Bat, the way to the river is open now, no doubt, and you had better take your mother to the boat. Come on, Red Hawk!"

The Delaware endeavored to persuade his eager companion to wait a few moments, until they could get a clearer idea of the actual position of affairs; but Alleyne was already off, and Red Hawk, unwilling to leave him in danger, had nothing to do but to follow him.

After a little brisk running, they again caught sight of Sue Archer, who was being partly dragged and partly carried by the white man and the Shawnee; but they found themselves, as Red Hawk had feared, in a dangerous position. They were, in fact, in front of the retreating Shawnees, who were between them and the then victorious white men; but they heard the cheering shouts of their friends, they knew that the Indians were running, and they had good reason to hope that they might keep in front of the runaways and rescue the girl without serious difficulty. Not daring to fire, they ran at the top of their speed, the Delaware being obliged, in hunter's phrase, to "keep his eyes in the back of his head," while Stephen saw only the struggling girl and the men who were carrying her away.

Sue Archer saw him coming to her rescue, and uttered scream after scream as she struggled yet more violently to break away. Amos Darnel saw him, too, and recognized him, and the sight struck him with a sudden fear. Dropping the girl's arm, he only exerted himself to fly from the avenger. The Shawnee saw the pursuers, and knew that he must fly for his life; but he was determined not to be again baffled of

his victim. He had raised his tomahawk over her head, when a bullet from Red Hawk's rifle sped through his brain and stretched him lifeless on the earth.

Stephen Alleyne rushed forward and seized the girl in his arms as she fainted. He would have stopped to endeavor to revive his helpless burden ; but the Delaware was at his side, and directed him to hurry forward with her, bearing gradually to the left, until he could get out of the way of the retreating Shawnees. He then lifted her in his arms, and pressed forward as rapidly as he could, while Red Hawk trotted behind him, loading his rifle as he went, and watching for enemies in the rear.

Sue Archer was light, and Stephen Alleyne was strong. He bore gradually to the left, and was congratulating himself upon being nearly out of danger, when his ears were stunned by a series of horrid yells, and he saw that he was surrounded by painted savages.

As he was seized and disarmed, he heard the glad shouts of the retreating party, as they recognized their friends, and as they turned back, eager to take vengeance on their assailants. He looked for Red Hawk, but the Delaware was nowhere to be seen.

CHAPTER XI.

BUCK HARDNETT'S SCOUT.

It was not until Bat Archer was safe on board the Promised Land, that his friends requested him to give an account of his adventures. His mother was so overcome by the loss of her husband, by her captivity, and by the terrible scenes that had attended her rescue, that he was compelled to devote himself to taking care of her, and he was left in quiet during the voyage down the river.

When Mrs. Archer had been conveyed on board the Promised Land, and placed in charge of Margaret Alleyne, the young man gave the particulars of the expedition, as far as he knew them.

"I told Captain Kenton that it was one of Red Hawk's tricks," remarked Buck Hardnett. "I said so as soon as we heard the shooting down by the camp. It was right well done, and it was done just in time. Do you say that Stephen and the Delaware left you just after those running red-skins had got near the camp?"

"They had started into the woods after Susan and Amos Darnel, but had got tangled up with the Indians, and were glad to get back out of the way. When they left me, Stephen wanted to get ahead of the Indians who were running. The Delaware tried to hold him back a little; but Stephen was not to be stopped."

"I take it that they must have got the red-skins that we were chasing between them and us, and it's likely that they ran up on the fresh batch of Shawnees that came in from the north. What do you think, captain?"

"You are right, I suppose," replied Kenton, "and one or both of them must have been taken or killed."

"One of them, I reckon. I don't believe either of those things has happened to the sachem yet. He keeps eyes in the back of his head, as well as in the front, and is not to be blinded on either side; but Stephen was apt to keep his sight on the gal, without looking carefully to see what he might run into. Yes; it's likely that the red-skins have caught Stephen Alleyne. His sister ought to be told about it; but I had rather not be the man to tell her."

The scout was saved from further perplexity, by the appearance of Margaret herself, who had overheard the latter portion of the conversation. Her countenance was pale, but firm, and her voice did not tremble as she addressed herself to Hardnett.

"Do I understand you to say," she asked, "that you believe that my brother has been captured or killed by the Indians?"

"We are afraid that the red-skins have caught him," replied the scout, drooping his head.

When he raised his eyes, he found those of Margaret Alleyne's fastened upon him with an inquiring gaze.

"Yes, ma'am," he said. "You are right about that. That is what I was meaning to do."

"What do you mean?" asked Bat Archer. "Margaret said nothing."

"Perhaps not, but I know what she means. No one can say that Buck Hardnett ever left a friend when there was a chance to help him. I was just thinking about the best way to do it. I must go ashore, of course, and find out what I can."

A grateful glance from Margaret told him that his offer was appreciated. No objection was made by any of the party to his undertaking a scout on shore, and he seated himself in Stephen Alleyne's dinky, after declining the company of Bat Archer.

As he took up the oars, Margaret came to him, and laid her hand on the stern of the little boat.

"I know that I ought not to have asked you to do this," she began.

"You didn't ask me, ma'am. I know that I ought to do it, and I asked myself. I hope you don't think that I needed any asking."

"I already know how good and generous you are. I ought not to let you go; but Stephen is my only brother, and is all I have in the world."

"May he live long to comfort you! Don't bother yourself about my going ashore. This is my business, and I attend to it as such."

"But it is a risky business, and you must not run into danger. You must not go too far. If you should be—killed—I should always feel that I had begged you to risk your life for my sake."

"But you haven't done any such thing. I don't know what I wouldn't risk for your sake; but I am called a cautious man. You must let me go now."

"Give me your hand."

The scout reached out his broad, brown hand, which Margaret Alleyne raised to her lips, and pressed upon it a kiss—a kiss of gratitude, of admiration, perhaps of love.

Buck Hardnett dropped his oars into the water, and the skiff shot away into the darkness like an arrow, the rower carrying a sweeter memory than he had ever known before, and feeling nerved to perform his task in the face of any danger or hardship.

Bat Archer had directed the scout to the place where the canoe had been left when he went ashore with Stephen Alleyne and Red Hawk, and toward that point Buck Hardnett rowed silently and swiftly. The night was quite dark; but he had taken his course from the boat, and the darkness was rather a help than a hindrance, as it concealed him from the Indians.

He landed the dinky, and drew it up into the bushes, near where the canoe was concealed, intending to tow the latter to the boat on his return. He then struck into the woods, taking the same route by which Red Hawk led his party in the afternoon, and reaching the Shawnee camp, as the Delaware had, at the lower side and a little to the rear.

The darkness was such that he was able to crawl within a short distance of the Indians without fear of being observed; but the darkness was also a serious impediment to his investigations, as it prevented him from seeing all that he wished to see.

He was able to discover that there was a considerable body of Indians in the camp; but he could not ascertain their numbers with any certainty. He only knew—a fact of which the evening's fight had already convinced him—that they largely outnumbered the men on the boats, and that he could not hope, with the force at his command, to whip them in a fair encounter.

They were all quiet, seemingly reposing, with the exception of a few sentinels who were stationed on the outskirts of the camp, and who did not seem inclined to venture from their posts. They had good reason to believe, no doubt, that they need not fear an attack from the Long-knives, and all were enjoying the rest which they so much needed.

As the scout surveyed the sleeping encampment, he wished that he had fifty Kentuckians there. He would keep them hid until daylight should give them good marks, and then their rifles would carry death to fully half the sleeping savages. One fire and a bursting charge would be sufficient to rout and scatter them. If he had expected to find the camp in such a condition, he would have tried to bring the men from the boats, in spite of their inadequate numbers and their wounds and fatigue, hoping to secure a victory by a surprise.

But he reflected that it would be much easier for one man to reach the position in which he was, without discovery, than it would be for fifty or even twenty men, and he thought that he should be thankful that he had no such chance to peril the lives of his friends.

He was satisfied with the observation he had been able to make concerning the numbers of the savages. They were too numerous to be attacked, and that was sufficient. He had crept so close to the camp that he had found himself among the sleeping Indians; but he had seen nothing of Stephen Alleyne or Red Hawk. He felt that he could not return to Margaret without carrying her some tidings of her brother, and it was also important that he should get some inkling of the designs of the Shawnees. Neither of these objects could be accomplished while the darkness lasted, and it would be necessary to prosecute his inquiries by daylight, although the risk would be greatly increased. He determined to go down to his boat, and wait there until the day should dawn.

As he approached the spot where the dinky was concealed, he was startled at seeing the dark figure of an Indian seated on the bank. Instinctively he stopped, and raised his rifle. It might be a Shawnee, who had discovered the boat, and he was waiting for the owner to return, that he might shoot him down; or it might be his friend Red Hawk. If it was the former, he kept a very careless watch; if the latter, he could easily discover the fact.

He gave the chirp of a cricket. The Indian started, and uttered a similar chirp.

"Does the sachem watch with his eyes shut?" asked Hardnett, as he advanced and extended his hand.

"Red Hawk has no need of eyes to watch the dogs of Shawnees," replied the Delaware, rising to meet his friend.

"Some of our friends were afraid that the sachem had been caught by the Shawnees; but I knew him too well for that. He must tell me what has happened to him."

The Delaware's account of his adventures corresponded with that of Bat Archer, up to the time when the latter separated from his two companions. He then related the pursuit of Susan Archer, concluding with the capture of Alleyne.

"And you slid out, of course," exclaimed Hardnett, "when you ran up against that fresh lot of Shawnees. The boy couldn't do it, as he had the girl on his hands; but I'll be bound that you got out of the way. Did any of them see you, sachem?"

"Don't know."

"If they did, they didn't see you when they looked for you again. I must say, sachem, that you're the keenest hand at snaking I ever came across. Do you know where Stephen is now?"

"With the Shawnees."

"Have they hurt him?"

"No. He is in the middle of the camp, tied hard, and I can't get at him yet."

"Perhaps something can be done in the morning. Something must be done to save that boy. The Shawnees must not have his life while I live to prevent it. I had made up my mind to wait until daylight, and I am glad that I have found you, as we can now work together."

"No, the Heavy Hand must go back to the boat. I will do what I can for the young man."

"I don't doubt that; but I might help you."

"Heavy Hand is a great warrior. His arm is strong in battle, and his heart is always brave; but his skin is white, and he can not creep among the Shawnees as Red Hawk can. Besides, he is needed at the boat."

"Why so?"

"The Shawnees have a boat, you know, and they want more scalps and plunder. They have lost many warriors, and they must have revenge before they can go back to their village. To-morrow they will make oars and get their boat ready to fight on the river."

"How does the sachem know this?"

"Red Hand has eyes and ears."

"That's a fact, and he knows how to use them if any man does. We may look for them, then, to-morrow night, and it won't do to give them our scalps, however anxious they may be to get them. I suppose I ought to go back to the boat; but I hate to leave without doing any thing for Stephen."

"I will do all I can to help him. Perhaps Heavy Hand might help him better on the river."

"I don't see my way clear to do that; but I know that I can rely on you, and I will go. May the Lord be with you and help you, Red Hawk!"

The scout pressed the hand of his friend, launched the dinky, and rowed across the dark water to the boats, towing the canoe behind him.

CHAPTER XII.

BAT ARCHER'S PLAN.

WHEN Buck Hardnett reached the Promised Land, he was met by Margaret Alleyne. He perceived that there was a look of pain in her face, although she greeted him with a smile, and he almost wished that he had remained on shore.

"You needn't ask me any questions," he said, as he made fast the dinky. "I know what you want to ask, and that is enough for me, and a little too much. I haven't even seen him, Miss Margaret."

"Can they have killed him?"

"He is alive, I believe, and not hurt."

"I believe you have done all you could do."

"And that is nothing, so far. But Red Hawk is there, and the sachem is worth two of me in such business. He will do all he can for Stephen, and he gave me to understand that I would be more in his way than a help. I wanted to stay until daylight, when my eyes would be of some use to me; but he thought I had better come back to the boat.

"I reckon the sachem was right," he continued, after relating what he had seen and what he had heard from Red Hawk. "We may expect a visit from the red-skins before long, and I must talk to the men about it, though it will hardly be worth while to break their rest now. You may rely on Red Hawk, Miss Margaret, and I believe he was right in thinking that he could do more without me than with me."

"I am sure that he will do all he can for my dear brother. You had better go and sleep now, as I know you need rest."

"And so do you, Miss Margaret. You don't know what may be before you."

In the morning a "council of war" was held on the barge, at which Hardnett told the particulars of his scouting expedition, and informed his friends of Red Hawk's opinion concerning the probability of a water attack by the Shawnees.

Opinions were divided with regard to the best course to be pursued in view of such an emergency. None of the men were willing to leave the captives without an effort to save them; but they differed widely as to the manner in which the expected attack should be received.

"It is plain to me," said Kenton, "that we can't fight them here. They are too many for us, and we should gain no advantage by dividing our men between the two boats. We could do them no damage worth speaking of, until we should meet them hand to hand, and then their numbers would be bound to win. I see nothing for it but to cut and run."

"There's one other plan that might be tried," suggested Hardnett, who seemed to be more inclined to rashness than he had been before Margaret Alleyne's brother was captured. "When they get fairly out in the channel, we might all hurry ashore and make for their camp. We would have the redskins divided then, and we might whip out the party on shore before the other party could come to help them. I think we would be a match for either party."

"That is a brave man's thought," replied Kenton, opening his eyes wide at this daring suggestion. "If we were all men, and if we had small boats enough to take us all ashore at once, I would be willing to try it, though we would have to whip, or every man of us would be wiped out. But we have not the boats, Buck, and I don't know what we would do with the women."

"Send them down the river on the barge."

"We would have to send some men with them, and not one could be spared. Your ideas are a little flighty, Buck, and we must think of some other plan."

"I think I have a better idea than that, though it may be a wilder one," said Bat Archer. "If you will step on the

other boat with me, Captain Kenton—you and Hardnett—I will tell it to you privately, as I don't want to be laughed at."

Kenton and Hardnett smilingly accompanied the young man to the Promised Land, and sat down while he explained his plan in a low tone. Kenton's eyes opened wider than they had at Hardnett's proposition, and the burly scout clapped his hands in glee.

"Do you suppose, Mr. Archer, that Stephen Alleyne would agree to it?" asked Kenton.

"Of course he would. You can speak to his sister, if you wish to, and I will guarantee that she will give her consent."

"Perhaps we had better not trouble her. Your plan is the last thing I would have thought of, and I believe it is the best thing that could be thought of. It may be wild; but this is a wild country, and wild deeds are needed. It shall be carried out, unless the men object to it, and I think it will suit them exactly."

After breakfast the men set at work to remove the goods and furniture from Stephen Alleyne's boat to the barge. They had had a good rest and a good meal, and were stronger and more hopeful than they had yet been. The barge, already heavily loaded, would not hold all the contents of the ark; but the most valuable articles were safely stowed, and accommodations were provided for Mrs. Archer and Margaret.

This work was completed early in the afternoon, and the men rested, while they watched the operations of the Indians on the shore above them. Not much could be determined with certainty; but they could see the savages moving about the bank, and could tell that they were employed upon the Good Hope. No attack was made, and none was expected before night.

The evening passed and dusk came on.

"It is time to be moving," said Hardnett. "All who are going on the barge must get aboard."

"Who is to stay here?" asked Margaret.

"I am to stay," replied Bat Archer.

"And I am to stay with him," said Hardnett.

"I don't see the use of that. I can do all that is to be done here, and it may be a little dangerous. Every man will be needed, and all who can should keep out of danger."

"You are right, young man. There may be a little danger; but it is important that there should be no mistake in this matter, and two heads are better than one, to say nothing of an extra pair of hands. You may need help, and I mean to stay and help you."

No one objected to the scout's determination, with the exception of Bat Archer, who was easily induced to withdraw his objections. As the shades of night came on, the barge was cast loose, and floated slowly down the stream, until it had passed an island a mile below the Promised Land. The sweeps were then called into use, bringing the boat into a position just below the island, where she was anchored, effectually screened from the view of both friends and foes up the river.

Buck Hardnett and Archer, who had nothing to do but await the movements of their enemies, lighted their pipes, and took their station at the bow of the ark, gazing intently up the river, to notice the first sign of motion on the part of the savages.

When night had fairly settled down upon land and water, the clouds were not as dense as they had been the previous night. The moon occasionally shone out through the rifts, giving the watchers a glimpse of the broad expanse of water, and the dark outline of the north shore, where the Good Hope could be seen, lying motionless against the bank, with the dark forms of the savages moving about her.

They had watched nearly two hours, without seeing any indications of movement above, when Archer perceived something in the water, to which he called the attention of his companion in a low tone.

"It looks like a man's head," he said.

"That's what it is."

"He is swimming or floating. It must be an Indian. Can it be Red Hawk?"

"No. He would have given a signal. That is a Shawnee."

"How nicely I could hit him!"

"Don't you do it. The red-skins have seen the barge go down the river, and have sent a spy to find out whether any men are left on this boat. He don't do his work like Red

Hawk would do it; but we must let him have his way. Don't act as if you see him. I will keep an eye on him, though I am sure he will not try to trouble us."

The Indian swam around to the stern of the boat, raised himself up, and looked in, while the two white men smoked in silence. He then swam to the side, and looked in there. Satisfied with his observation, he floated down the river a short distance, and then struck out toward the shore.

"He is gone," said Hardnett, after he had got up and looked around. "He will report to the red-skins, and they will be down on us before long, I reckon."

"They won't be more anxious to come than I will be anxious to see them. I will have a splendid revenge, I hope, for the murder of my father."

"I hope so; but we mustn't be too certain. I hope, too, that a way may open to get your sister and Stephen Alleyne out of their hands."

The pipes of the watchers were smoked out, and Bat Archer had grown quite impatient, before they observed any further movement on the part of their enemies. It had become quite dark, the thick clouds entirely obscuring the moon, and blotting out the view of the shore. They were not a little surprised when the mild luminary at last showed her face through a break in the clouds, and they descried the Good Hope in the middle of the channel, bearing down upon them.

"Now is our time!" exclaimed Bat Archer, jumping up. "Now we will fix the bloody scoundrels!"

"Not so fast, my friend. We would have time enough to get away, if we should wait till they are right aboard of us, and we can't afford to miss our aim."

Hardnett waited, until the dark figure of the Good Hope could be distinctly seen, not a hundred yards from the Promised Land. Then he led the way through the boat, and stood up at the stern, watching the approaching enemy, while Archer busied himself with something under the shelter.

"Now!" whispered the scout, after the lapse of a few moments.

Something fizzed and crackled, and the two men quickly jumped into the canoe, and shoved off, paddling directly

down the river, so as to keep in the shadow of the ark as long as possible.

They had gone but a short distance, when they heard a crash which told them that the boats had come together, and they saw the Indians jumping on board the Promised Land, uttering yells and cries of rage as they discovered that it was untenanted and nearly empty.

In another moment the savages had discovered the fugitives in the canoe, and shot after shot was fired at them; but the current was swift, and they had paddled so rapidly that they were nearly out of danger, and the bullets splashed harmlessly into the water.

"How the thing hangs fire!" exclaimed Bat Archer. "Can it be possible that it will miss fire?"

"No! The train was laid and fired too well for failure." In another moment, while the savages were crowding each other on the roofs of the two boats that lay side by side, there was a grand explosion, and a mass of flame and smoke rushed up into the air. The explosion was accompanied by yells and shrieks, and was followed by a downward rush of miscellaneous fragments, scattering themselves over the surface of the water, some falling around the canoe, which was tossed as if on the waves of an earthquake.

"I hope you are satisfied, young man," said Hardnett. "If that is not revenge for your father's death, I don't know what more you would have."

"It could not have been done better. I verily believe that both boats were blown to atoms. Let us hurry down to the barge, as our friends will be anxious about us."

They paddled swiftly and in silence, neither speaking again until they reached the barge, where their friends were waiting to congratulate them.

CHAPTER XIII.

A ONE-SIDED BARGAIN.

IF Stephen Alleyne did not feel, like the man who fell from the house, very much "discouraged," he had reason to feel so, and perhaps a little worse, when he was captured by the Shawnees. His prize had been in his grasp, and he had deemed himself just within reach of safety, when his hopes were so cruelly dashed to the ground.

His captors kicked and cuffed him unmercifully as they dragged him along; but the aches and smarts of his body were nothing to the pain and anguish of his mind, when he again saw the girl of his love a prisoner in their hands, and felt himself unable to help her.

When the excitement of the combat had subsided, and the white men in the barge had safely got out of the reach of their enemies, he was taken to the camp, where he was securely fastened for the night, his limbs being so bound down to the earth that it was impossible for him to move. His position was very painful, and he knew that escape was out of the question, as, if he should be able to free himself from his bonds, he could not hope to escape the Indians who lay around him on all sides.

Night closed down upon the camp, and the savages slumbered sonorously; but it was long before sleep visited the eyelids of the prisoner, and then it came only in fitful snatches, the pain of his tightly-corded limbs awaking him whenever he fell into a doze.

As he started out of one of his dozes, he heard the chirp of a wood-cricket, that seemed to proceed from a thicket of bushes near the edge of the camp. There was nothing remarkable in this; but he remembered having been told by Buck Hardnett that the chirp of a cricket was a favorite signal with Red Hawk. He had seen nothing of the Delaware since his capture, and supposed that he had escaped. The chirp was uttered three times, and then ceased, and

Stephen believed that he had a friend at hand. He could not imagine how his friend would be able to help him; but it was a comfort to know that he had a friend.

Sue Archer was in trouble, as well as her lover. She had been almost resigned to her fate—or, rather, she had nearly despaired of escaping from it—when she saw him rushing to her rescue. When she fell into his arms, it was excess of joy that caused her to faint, as much as her fatigue and her fright. She was still insensible when he was seized and dragged away; but, when she came to herself, she felt that he was a prisoner, and it was not long before she was convinced of the sad fact. Her own captivity, and the dread of her own fate were painful enough; but it redoubled her grief and anxiety to know that Stephen Alleyne was also a captive, that he had been taken while he was endeavoring to rescue her, and that his fate must be terrible in the extreme. She had heard enough of the tender mercies of the savages to be sure that a speedy death would be the most fortunate event that could happen to him, as his life would be prolonged only that he might be subjected to the most cruel tortures.

When she was taken back to the camp, she was not only more securely guarded, but was bound. She passed a restless, if not a sleepless night, and awoke in the morning with a deeper feeling of misery than she had yet experienced. It was really a relief to her, much as she disliked the man, when she saw Amos Darnel coming toward her. She knew that he had influence with the Indians, and she did not believe that he could be entirely destitute of heart, of sympathy for his own race. She would humble herself to sue him for mercy, not for herself, but for Stephen Alleyne. She thought that she could endure her own fate—if it came to the worst, she could find the means of self-destruction—but she could not bear to think that the life of her lover must be lost, that he must die by torture.

Amos Darnel had been rising rapidly in the favor of the savages. He had pleased them by showing such alacrity in decoying the barge to the shore, although that affair had resulted so badly. He had not failed to magnify his services in preventing the rescue of Sue Archer, and had induced the Shawnees to believe that he had performed a very daring

action. He had also induced the chief to believe that he intended to become an Indian, and that he would make a very good Indian. It was after a conversation with Senapco that he approached Sue Archer, and he was in a fitting mood to listen to her appeals. It would be much better for him, in many ways, to have a willing than an unwilling bride, and he thought that he saw his way clear to work upon her feelings in regard to Stephen Alleyne.

She herself opened the way. He agreed to what she said concerning the pitiable situation of her lover, and the necessity of showing mercy. In fact, he went further than she went, and painted the horrors of Indian torture very vividly. It would be impossible for Stephen to escape those tortures, he said, unless the Indians could be induced to let him go. When she referred to the influence that he seemed to have among the Shawnees, he admitted it, and enlarged upon it a little. At last he made an offer in plain words.

"If I save the life of Stephen Alleyne," he said—"if I procure his release from the Indians, and if I carry you safely to the settlements somewhere—it don't matter where—will you promise to be my wife?"

It was hard for the girl to answer this question. She knew that Stephen would not accept his life upon such terms; but she saw no other chance for his escape from a cruel death. He was uppermost in her thoughts, and she feared no future if she might save him.

"Unless you agree to this, he must die," said Darnel. "If I choose to keep you in my power, there is nothing to prevent me. Why should you kill him? I only ask you to give me what I could easily take, and it is out of pure kindness that I offer to save his life."

The girl begged and implored him for easier terms; but Darnel would consent to no modification of his offer, and at last, with a hopeless heart and a broken voice, she yielded her consent.

"Swear to it," said Darnel, and he exacted a solemn oath for the fulfillment of her promise.

"To-night," said he, as he left her, "Stephen Alleyne will be free, and it will not be long before I will take you to a place of safety."

It must be here set down to the discredit of Amos Darnel, that he did not intend to perform his part of the agreement. While he was anxious that Sue Archer should consent to become his wife, he was not anxious that her lover should live, and he knew that his influence with the Shawnees was not such as would allow him to rob them of a victim, when the expedition had cost them so many warriors. In truth, he meant to deceive the girl into the belief that Stephen was safe, and then escape with her from the Indians.

Early in the night he went to the place where Stephen was confined, carrying the war-club of the chief, as a token that his commands were to be obeyed. The greater part of the warriors were at the river, preparing for the expedition in the Good Hope, and he had been intrusted with the war-club by Senapco, to whom he had communicated as much of his design as suited him.

Showing his club to the warriors as his warrant for what he was about to do, he stooped down and cut the bonds of the prisoner.

Stephen Alleyne with difficulty raised himself to a sitting posture, and gazed at the man who had released him, wondering what was next to happen; but he saw no mercy in the hard lines of Amos Darnel's face, or in the malicious twinkle of his eyes.

"If I am to die," he said, "I am ready to die like a man; but I hope that such a dog as you will have nothing to do with my death."

"This man is to be hid," said Darnel, not replying to the prisoner, turning to his warriors, and again showing his club. "Such is the order of the chief. He must be well bound, and must be concealed until the warriors start to return to the village. Who will take care of him, and will answer with his life to the chief that he does not escape?"

"I will," said a tall young warrior, stepping up and quickly tying Stephen's hands behind his back. "I will tie him tightly and hide him well, and he shall not be seen until the chief calls for him. The chief knows that White-Crow will do as he says. Come, dog of a Long-knife!"

The Indian pulled the cord, and Stephen Alleyne, after a parting glance of disgust at Darnel, rose and followed him.

The prisoner was led along the edge of the encampment a short distance, and then his conductor gradually bent his course into the forest. He soon turned, and led Stephen around toward the rear of the camp, until they reached a hollow, through which ran a small stream. Stephen quietly followed, but began to think whether it might not be possible for him to free his wrists from the cord. If he should succeed in doing so, he would be obliged to struggle, weak and unarmed as he was, with a savage who was fully armed; but his life was worth the risk of his life.

The Indian put a stop to these reflections by halting and untying the cords. He then looked the prisoner in the face and smiled as he uttered the chirp of a cricket.

"Red Hawk! Is it really you?"

"Could not my white brother see through the Shawnee paint?"

"Is it possible? How could you go among them without being discovered?"

"It was easy. So many Shawnees come that they don't know each other, and they did not notice me."

"I can hardly believe that I am really saved from them. How can I thank you!"

"Make no noise. I took the name of one of their dead warriors. They may soon find out that there is no White Crow, and then there will be a search. Let us hide. Follow me."

The Delaware stepped into the water, followed by Stephen, and led the way up the brook, until he came to an enormous white oak tree, which was partly hollow. From the hollow he took a rifle, which he handed to Stephen.

"Can my brother climb?" he asked. "There is no trail to hide."

Stephen signifying that he could climb, Red Hawk led the way up into the tree, where they ensconced themselves among the giant branches, in such a position that they could not be seen from below.

"We must stay here," said the Delaware, "until the search is over."

They waited in vain for search to be made, and Stephen, notwithstanding his lofty situation, had nearly dropped asleep,

when they were startled by a loud explosion, and a bright light shone for a moment, in the direction of the river, and then suddenly disappeared.

"The boat has blown up," said Stephen, as his companion looked at him in amazement.

They remained in the tree until daybreak, when they descended, and cautiously made their way to the river. Nothing was to be seen but the swollen mass of water, hurrying onward toward the ocean. The Promised Land had disappeared; the Good Hope had vanished; there was no craft of any description in sight.

"I don't understand this," said Alleyne. "Our friends have gone—somewhere—I can't even guess where—perhaps to their graves. The Shawnees still have a captive, and I must not leave them while there is a chance to save her. Will you stand by me, Red Hawk?"

"Come. We must find a hiding-place. We can do nothing until dark."

Red Hawk, who had made himself familiar with every foot of ground in the vicinity, led the way to a dense thicket, covering the trail of himself and his companion as they entered it. After giving Stephen a meal of dried meat and parched corn, he made him lie down to sleep, while he himself kept watch. They were not disturbed, and when Stephen awoke, Red Hawk, in turn, took some rest.

Thus the greater part of the day was passed. When it was near sunset, the Delaware proposed to go and scout around the Shawnee camp, and requested Stephen to remain where he was for awhile. Within an hour the scout returned, bringing the intelligence that the Shawnees had broken up their camp, and had set out to return to their village.

"We must follow them!" exclaimed Stephen. "If Susan is taken to their village, it will be impossible to rescue her. I ask you again, Red Hawk, to stand by me."

"Come!" replied the Indian, and the two shouldered their rifles, and marched toward the north, on a line with the route which Red Hawk supposed the Shawnees would pursue.

They had traveled about three hours without changing their course, when the Delaware suddenly halted, and laid his hand on his companion's arm.

"What is the matter?" whispered Stephen.

"Listen!"

Stephen thought that he heard voices, and was sure that he heard a strange, growling sound, that seemed to be located in the branches of a tree just beyond him.

The next instant a dark object sprung out of the tree, and came to the ground with a crash.

"Was that a panther?" asked Stephen.

"Hush!" replied Red Hawk, as he dropped on one knee, and raised his rifle to his shoulder.

The rifle cracked, and both rushed forward.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE SPRING OF A PANTHER.

AMOS DARNEL did not retire to rest after he had accomplished his purpose with regard to Stephen Alleyne. He had done such a good thing, that he wished to stay awake and felicitate himself upon what he had gained. He could easily persuade Sue Archer that Stephen Alleyne had escaped, and he was sure that she would keep her oath. He would have a consenting bride, though an unwilling one, and that would be a strong point in his favor, wherever he might be.

As he was then at liberty to go where he pleased, he walked down to the water, to see what could be seen of the expedition that had set out to capture the two boats in the river.

The Good Hope had started some time before he reached the shore, but could still be seen, far out in the channel, slowly floating down the dark river. There were a number of warriors on the bank, watching the course of the boat, and from one of them Darnel learned that the barge had gone down the river just at dusk.

"Was it not supposed," he asked, "that all the white men had escaped in her?"

"No. If they had all gone, they would have taken the other boat. Besides, a good swimmer had gone out to the

boat, and had returned and reported that there were men on board.

It was the general opinion that the warriors would have an easy victory if the boat should not escape, and she had shown no sign of intending to make the attempt. It may be said, this time to the credit of Amos Darnel, that he hoped the white men might escape, as he had no personal interest in their death or capture.

As long as the boats could be seen by those on shore, that which was at anchor had not moved from its position; but the night soon became so dark that nothing could be seen. The attack, however, must be made in a short time, and Darnel waited with the warriors, listening for the shots and shouting, from which they would be able to tell how the encounter went.

Neither shots nor shouting were heard. Instead, there was a terrible explosion, a great flash of light; then all was silence and darkness.

Amos Darnel could guess at what had happened; but the Indians were mystified and horror-struck. Others came down to the shore, and they waited until daylight for their warriors to return; but they saw nothing more of those who had started on the *Good Hope*. Morning showed them no boat, no vestige of a wreck, nothing but the expanse of swift-flowing water.

The Indians were overcome by this last disaster, the more so because it was unexplainable. Their friends had left them—strong and valiant warriors—had been watched as they floated down the stream—thick darkness had shut them from the sight of the watchers—and then—what could it be but the fire of the Great Spirit that had suddenly consumed them? It was certain that they had vanished utterly, in a blaze of fire, leaving no word or sign.

This visitation—for such the Shawnees considered it—had a powerful effect upon them. Amid all their bloodthirstiness and cruelty, they maintained a deep awe and veneration for the Great Spirit, the creator and ruler of all, and it was evident that He was angry with them.

Nothing remained but to abandon the expedition, which had been attended with such a loss of life, and to which the

Great Spirit was so plainly opposed. It was unanimously resolved to return at once to the Shawnee towns, and the rest of the day was spent in making preparations for departure. Some of the warriors even doubted whether they ought to further offend the Great Spirit by carrying away the plunder that they had taken from the Good Hope. But avarice prevailed over superstition, and every thing portable was packed for transportation.

It was then that Amos Darnel found himself in trouble.

The chief whose friendship he had formed, and who had lately patronized him and confided in him, had been the leader of the expedition on the Good Hope, and had vanished with the rest of the party. The chief who now took command was the same who had led the last band of Shawnees that came from the north. This chief "knew not Joseph," nor was he well acquainted with Amos Darnel; but he did know that a white man who had been taken prisoner ought to be forthcoming, and he made inquiries concerning him. He was referred to Darnel as the man who was responsible for the disappearance of the prisoner.

Darnel explained that he had caused Alleyne to be unbound by the order of Senapco, with whom he had made an agreement for a certain purpose, and who had given him his war-club in token of authority. It had not been the intention to release the prisoner, and he had not been released. On the contrary, he had been given in charge to a warrior named White Crow, who had promised to hide him and keep him safely, and it was to be supposed that he was somewhere in the vicinity of the camp. If the chief would cause search to be made for White Crow, the prisoner would soon be produced.

"White Crow!" exclaimed the chief, in amazement. "White Crow is dead!"

"Was he one of the warriors who went on the big boat?" asked Darnel.

"He was killed long before the big boat left the shore. I saw him buried."

It was Darnel's turn to be astonished. There was no such person as White Crow, and Stephen Alleyne had been spirited away. Amos Darnel had performed his promise to Sue

Archer without intending it. He was by no means pleased at this turn of affairs, and was anxious that search should at once be made for the lost prisoner; but the chief refused to make any effort, saying that the white man had got so far away that it would be useless to look for him.

The truth is, the Indians were inclined to believe that the spirit of the slain warrior, White Crow, had carried away the prisoner, and they saw in this mysterious event another indication of the displeasure of the Great Spirit. Amos Darnel, who had no superstitious notions, was ready to connect the disappearance of Stephen Alleyne with the strange Indian who had released Bat Archer, and who had troubled the Shawnees so boldly and secretly.

This set him to thinking. It was possible that Stephen and his Indian friend might be still hovering about the camp, in the hope of effecting the rescue of Susan; but they could do nothing against such a body of Shawnees, and it was probable that they would go to join their friends, who had undoubtedly moved down the river. At all events, he need not expect that they would trouble him.

He easily dismissed this fear from his mind; but there was another matter that caused him anxiety. The new chief was not his friend, and he could see that many of the warriors looked upon him with suspicion. If he should accompany the Shawnees to their village, he might not find it so easy to carry out his designs with regard to Sue Archer as he had supposed it would be. Even with her consent, it was doubtful whether he would be able to make her his wife and take her out of the hands of the Indians.

There was, also, a question of personal safety. A number of the Indians disliked him, and he had no longer a powerful protector. It was probable that this dislike would increase, rather than diminish, and it was possible that they might take it into their heads to torture him at the village, in the place of the prisoner who had escaped.

He was not a man to run such a risk if he could help it, and he had not long thought upon the matter before he came to the conclusion that he must get away from his uncertain friends. As he had his liberty, it would be easy to escape, and he thought that he would be able to take Susan with him.

He would carry her to some settlement where he was unknown ; she would fulfill her promise, and all would be well.

He went to her after the Indians had started, and informed her that he had procured the release of Stephen Alleyne, as he had promised to do. She had already heard that the white man had escaped, and was satisfied. Supposing that the escape had been effected with the connivance of Darnel, she did not question him any further, and he proceeded to explain the plan by which he proposed to free himself and her from the power of the Indians. As he was insecurely guarded, he thought that it would not be difficult, when the band should stop to rest, to spirit her away. Once in the woods, the darkness would be their protection, and they could remain in concealment until morning, when they could make their way to the river.

Susan silently assented to all he said. She no longer had a will of her own. She had sacrificed herself to save the life of her lover, and she hardly cared what might become of her. She believed that she could protect herself from Darnel, if it should be necessary, and almost any thing would be better than an endless captivity among the savages.

Darnel remained near her, waiting until some interruption in the march should give him an opportunity to slip away with her.

The opportunity came sooner than he could have hoped, and in a manner that he would not have expected.

The line of march led across a ravine, the sides of which were so precipitous that they were difficult to climb. As the Indians were descending, one of the foremost, who was loaded with a heavy iron kettle, missed his footing, and fell to the bottom. The fall might not have injured him seriously ; but it so happened that the kettle fell upon his head, crushing his skull, and he expired in a few minutes.

Here was another striking proof that the Great Spirit was angry with his red children. Those who had objected to taking away the plunder called attention to this signal stroke of vengeance, and it was at once decided that it must be carried no further. Every thing was thrown upon the ground, and no Shawnee could again be induced to touch an article of the plunder.

But this was not sufficient to propitiate the angry deity. A clamor was raised that the white people must go free, that they must be sent away, and then the Great Spirit might permit his red children to reach their homes in safety.

After a little hesitation this course was adopted. A rifle was given to Amos Darnel, with some dried meat and parched corn, and then the white people were told that they might go where they pleased. They hastened to avail themselves of this permission, as the mood of the savages might change at any moment, and were soon out of sight of the Shawnees, on the back trail.

The trail was plain enough ; but the night was dark, and Amos Darnel had little knowledge of woodcraft. Their progress was so slow, that he soon proposed that they should halt and rest until daylight. It was necessary, he said, to follow the trail back to the river, and it was almost impossible for him to keep it while the darkness lasted.

Susan, weary and heartsick, readily consented, and Darnel spread a blanket for her, promising to keep watch while she slept.

Sleep visited her tired eyelids after a while ; but she soon awoke with a start and a faint cry. Raising herself on her arm she saw Amos Darnel standing at a little distance, leaning on his rifle.

"What is the matter?" he asked.

"I was frightened. Did you hear nothing?"

"No."

But Susan *did* hear something at that moment—a strange growling sound, that seemed to be up in the air, and that sent shudder after shudder over her frame. Darnel heard it, too, and he looked anxiously up into the trees.

There was a rush of a dark object from above, and Darnel was knocked over by the spring of a panther, which fastened its teeth in his neck as it bore him to the ground.

Susan gazed at the beast in horror, unable to move or to speak.

Then came the sharp report of a rifle, and she fainted.

CHAPTER XV.

CONCLUSION.

It was the intention of Hardnett and Kenton, if Bat Archer's gunpowder experiment should prove a success, to make an immediate attack upon the Shawnee camp, hoping to surprise and conquer the remnant of the band of savages; but the night was so far gone when the canoe reached the barge, that they perceived that they would hardly have time to get all their party on shore by daylight. As the Shawnees were still too numerous for them to hope to succeed except by a surprise, they were obliged to defer the attack.

They waited, with a reasonable degree of patience, until dusk, when they commenced ferrying the men to the shore in the canoe and dinky and the skiff that belonged to the barge, one wounded man being left on the barge with Mrs. Archer and Margaret. As this operation required considerable time, it was quite dark when all were on shore and ready to advance.

Hardnett took the lead, the rest of the party following him in single file. He struck as straight a course as possible for the Shawnee encampment, and all moved forward at a brisk pace; but it was not until the lapse of an hour that they found themselves near enough to commence operations.

The scout halted the party, and requested his companions to remain where they were, while he should go forward alone and reconnoiter the position of the enemy. He was gone but a short time, and returned with the intelligence that the camp was deserted.

He was well enough acquainted with Indian character to be able to guess at the cause of this sudden departure, happening, as it did, so soon after the explosion on the river, and he knew that it was expedient to hurry forward on the trail of the savages, so as to strike them on the rear during the darkness.

His companions appreciated the necessity of haste, and

were eager to overtake the foe. A brief examination showed them that it had not been long since the Shawnees had left their camp, and it was believed that a proper degree of speed would enable them to accomplish their object without difficulty.

Although the night was dark, the trail was plain enough to such woodsmen as Kenton and Hardnett, who led the party forward nearly at a run, scarcely ever slackening their speed to make sure that they were on the right track. After keeping up this pace an hour or so, they stopped for the purpose of examining the ground carefully, in order to determine whether Sue Archer and Stephen Alleyne were still with the Indians. A peculiarity in Stephen's moccasin would enable them to identify his track, and the girl's heeled shoes would be easily traced. They soon found Susan's track, the ground where they had stopped being soft and nearly destitute of leaves; but they could find nothing to convince them that Alleyne was ahead of them.

They were again about to press forward, when they were surprised at hearing the report of a rifle, at a short distance from where they were standing.

"Can it be possible that we have come upon them already?" asked Kenton.

"Scarcely," replied Hardnett. "If that wasn't Red Hawk's rifle, I will allow that I may be deceived in the voice of a gun that I ought to know. But we must be careful. Stay here a little, boys, while I go on and see what the matter is."

The scout disappeared, and in a few moments his companions heard a joyful "whoop!" which told them that he had found friends.

They ran forward, guided by the sound of his voice, and found him standing in a glade, surrounded by tall trees. At his side was Red Hawk, wiping a bloody knife. At one place on the ground was Sue Archer, supported by Stephen Alleyne. At another place was the mangled body of a white man, and near him lay an immense dead panther.

All were eager to learn the meaning of this strange scene, and many were the questions that were showered upon Red Hawk; but the Delaware was only able to tell what he had seen and knew.

He described the manner in which Alleyne had effected

his escape, and pointed out the course that he had taken for the purpose of striking the trail of the Shawnees. He and Stephen had stopped, he said, on hearing the sound of voices, and he had seen the panther spring from the tree upon the white man who lay there. As quickly as possible he had taken aim and shot the panther, and had then run up and dispatched the beast with his knife; but the white man was dead, or nearly so. He had noticed the girl as he ran up, and he did not know how she and the white man had happened to be there.

"It is that miserable sneak who brought the boats ashore," said Hardnett, as he examined the body of the white man.

"Yes," said Bat Archer, "it is Amos Darnel."

There was yet a faint spark of life in Darnel's body; but he was insensible, and the spark soon went out.

"It must have been a judgment on him," remarked Buck Hardnett, "and I reckon it is for the best that it happened so. I wouldn't have liked to had the killing of such a skunk."

Sue Archer had revived, and the attention of all was directed to her, as all were anxious to hear how she had escaped from the Indians.

At first she seemed unable to speak, and a tall backwoodsman produced a "tickler" from the breast of his hunting-shirt, suggesting that a taste of spirits would loosen her tongue. It had the desired effect, and she began her story, addressing herself to Stephen Alleyne:

"After Amos Darnel set you free—" she commenced.

"After what?" interrupted Stephen. "Amos Darnel never thought of setting me free."

There was so much surprise on both sides, that mutual explanations were necessary, and Susan learned the full extent of Amos Darnel's perfidy.

"The wretch!" she exclaimed, with a glance at his corpse. "But he has paid for that, and he is beyond abuse now."

As she proceeded with her narrative, it became necessary to explain matters to Stephen Alleyne and the Delaware, who had not yet been able to account for the loud report and the great light on the river. When Red Hawk comprehended what had happened, he held out his hand to Bat Archer and told him that he was a great warrior.

Susan related how stupefied the Indians had become after that occurrence, how they had set out to return to their town, and how, upon the death of a warrior on the route, they had set her and Amos Darnel free, telling them to go where they pleased. She did not omit to mention that the savages had been so overcome by superstitious fear that they had abandoned all their plunder.

For Amos Darnel there was a universal sentiment of execration; but it was agreed that it would be better to bury his body, than to leave it to the wolves and the crows.

This done, Bat Archer and another young man were directed to hasten back to the barge, to inform Mrs. Archer and Margaret Alleyne of what had transpired, and the others went up the trail to look for the plunder that had been abandoned by the Indians. They found it ready packed, and selected such of the most valuable articles as they could carry. Loaded with these, they made their way back to the river at the place where they had left their boats.

The barge was brought to the bank, for the purpose of more easily loading the men and the plunder, and Sue Archer and Stephen Alleyne were restored to their rejoicing friends. Kenton and his companions were then, according to their request, landed on the other shore, as they wished to return to their homes, and the others pursued their way in the barge to their destination, which they reached in safety.

Stephen Alleyne had already secured a location, and he and Bat Archer at once set at work to erect a cabin. As soon as it was finished, the former was married to Sue Archer, having persuaded her that the ceremony ought to be performed before she should be again captured by Indians.

Bat Archer and his mother lived with Stephen Alleyne, at whose house none were ever so welcome as Red Hawk and Buck Hardnett, the latter of whom was so well pleased with the location that he settled in the vicinity.

It was generally supposed that the stout scout would be pleased with any neighborhood that held Margaret Alleyne, and Margaret was more than once known to blush when such an insinuation was made in her hearing.

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